The Children's Odyssey

AGNES COOK GALE

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THE GREEKS LEAVING TROY.

Homerus.

THE CHILDREN'S ODYSSEY

With an Introductory Chapter on Greek Myths

By
AGNES COOK GALE
Author of The Story of Ulysses, Achilles and Hector, Etc.

Illustrated by half tone cuts taken from photographs by Karl Schwier, of the frescoes of Preller on the walls of the *Grossherzogliches Museum* at Weimar, Germany, with the permission of the director, *Herr* Dr. W. Hermens.

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To
L. F. C.
For being good.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The changes which appear in this enlarged edition of "The Story of Ulysses" have been made with the purpose of bringing it nearer to the original. It is hoped that the added material will prove to be of value in giving the children a fuller and more vivid idea of Greek life in Homeric times.

The new title has been adopted for the convenience of the publisher. It is the modest hope of both publisher and author that "The Children's Odyssey" may at least fall heir to all the friends won by "The Story of Ulysses." Whether it will be fortunate enough to increase that generous number, as the years go by, will of course depend upon itself.

Grateful acknowledgment is made herewith to Mrs. Lida B. McMurry of the Northern Illinois State Normal School for the helpful advice in the preparation of the original manuscript; to Mr. W. Scott Thurber for the loan of his fine carbon print of Turner's "Ulysses and Polyphemus" for reproduction in this book; and to *Herr* Dr. W. Hermens, Director of the *Grossherzogliches Muzeum* at Weimar, Germany, for special permission to use as illustrations the frescoes of Preller, which are on the walls of the *Muzeum*, and which were photographed in Weimar by Karl Schwier (*Verlag der Deutschen Photographen-Zeitung.*)

A. C. G.

Chicago, 1912.

PRONUNCIATION OF NAMES

Achilles, a-kil′lēz
Aegean, ē-jē′an
Aeolus, ē′-ō-lus
Agamemnon, ag-a-mem′non
Ajax, ā′jaks
Amphinomus, am-fin′ō-mus
Antinous, an-tin′ō-us
Aphrodite, af-ro-dī′tē
Ares, ā′rēz
Ariadne, ar-i-ad′ne
Artemis, ar′te-mis
Athene, a-thē′nē
Aulis, aw′lis
Calypso, ca-lip′so
Cassandra, cas-san′dra
Charybdis, ca-rib′dis
Ciconians, si-cō′ni-ans
Circe, sir′sē
Clytemnestra, clit-em-nes′tra
Clytoneus, clit-ō′nūs
Demodocus, de-mod′o-cus
Diomedes, dī-ō-mē′dēz
Dionysus, dī-ō-nī′sus
Dolius, dō′li-us
Eumaeus, ū-mē′us
Euryalus, ū-rī′a-lus
Eurycleia, ū ri-clī′a
Eurylochus, ū-ril′ō-cus
Eurymachus, ū-rim′a-cus
Hades, hā′dēz
Hephaestus, he-fes′tus
Heracles, her′a-clēs
Here, hē′-rē
Hermes, her′mēz
Icarius, ī-cā′ri-us
Iphimedeia, if-i-me-dī′-a
Ismarus, is′ma-rus
Lacedaemon, las-e-dē′mon
Laertes, lā-er′tēz
Laodamas, lā-od′a-mas
Loacoön, lā-oc′ō-on
Medon, mē′don
Menelaus, men-e-lā′us
Nausicaa, nau-sic′ā-a
Neriton, ner′i-ton
Odysseus, ō-dis′sūs
Orion, o-rī′on
Patroclus, pa-trō′clus
Peiraeus, pi-rē′-us
Peleus, pē′lūs
Penelope, pē-nel-ō-pē
Perseus, per′sūs
Phaeacia, fē-ā′shi-a
Phaethon, fā′thon
Polyphemus, pol-if-ē′mus
Poseidon, pō-sī′don
Persephone, per-seph′ō-nē
Pylos, pī′los
Samos, sā′mos
Scylla, sil′la
Sinon, sī′non
Sisyphus, sis′if-us
Tantalus, tan′ta-lus
Telemachus, tel-em′a-cus
Thetis, thē′tis
Theseus, thē′sūs
Tiresias, ti-rē′si-as
Taphians, tā′fi-ans
Temese, tē-mē′sē

INDEX TO CHAPTERS

		PAGE
I.	Odysseus and Penelope	21
II.	Odysseus Plows the Seashore	27
III.	Odysseus at Troy	32
IV.	The Wooden Horse	40
V.	Odysseus Visits the Lotus Eaters	47
VI.	The Giant Polyphemus	51
VII.	Aeolus and the Bag of Winds	61
VIII.	The Man-Eaters	65
IX.	Circe and the Swine	68
X.	The Shadow Land	79
XI.	The Sirens	85
XII.	The Dangerous Channel	88
XIII.	The Sun-God's Cattle	92
XIV.	Calypso and the Raft	98
XV.	The Sea-Bird's Gift	104
XVI.	Nausicaa's Washing	109
XVII.	At the Palace of the Phaeacian King	114
XVIII.	Odysseus Among the Phaeacians	122
XIX.	Penelope's Weaving	133
XX.	The Young Prince and His Guest	137
XXI.	Telemachus at the Council	145
XXII.	Telemachus Takes Leave	151
XXIII.	Telemachus Visits Nestor	156
XXIV.	The Suitors' Wicked Plan	165
XXV.	Telemachus Visits Menelaus	170
XXVI.	Odysseus Leaves the Phaeacians	180
XXVII.	The Disguise	184
XXVIII.	The Beggar and the Swineherd	189
XXIX.	Father and Son	197
XXX.	The Beggar at the Palace	202
XXXI.	The Beggars' Quarrel	213
XXXII.	Penelope Among the Suitors	219
XXXIII.	The Scar of the Boar's Tusk	223
XXXIV.	The Trial of the Bow	234
XXXV.	The Queen's Welcome	255
XXXVI.	Laertes; and Peace	260

INTRODUCTION.

The Greeks and Their Stories.

Far away, on the other side of the earth, lies a very beautiful country called Greece. It is a land of up-and-down—of high, steep mountain ranges surrounding narrow valleys. The forests covering these mountains are thousands of years old. Streams from the mountains rush down through the valleys, widen into rivers, and flow at last into the blue Mediterranean Sea. And mountains, woodland, and well-watered valleys stretch away beneath the clearest and most brilliant skies in the whole world.

No wonder that the Greek people have always loved their country. They delighted in its rugged mountains, blue in the morning, silvery at noon, and purple

against the evening sky. Its deep, wild woods were full of lovely sights and sounds for them. They enjoyed the yellow sunshine and the marvelously clear blue sky. They wondered at the strong sea, the many-sounding sea that murmurs in calm and roars beneath a tempest—the sea that tosses a great ship about as if it were a plaything. But most of all they wondered at the storms, the thunder and the lightning.

Long ago the Greeks had many stories to tell about all these wonders of the out-door world. If a child asked, "What makes the thunder?" his mother answered, "Great Zeus is angry up there in the heavens. His right hand holds the thunderbolt, and he hurls it upon the earth."

When they saw the foaming surf roll in upon the sea shore, they said, "There goes Poseidon, god of the ocean, driving his wild white horses. Behold their tossing manes!" And when a gentle breeze blew across the waves, so that they rippled and sparkled in

the sun, "Poseidon's daughters, the pretty nymphs, are laughing and playing in the water."

The winds all had their names, and you shall read in the story of Odysseus how they once were shut up in a bag and then let loose again.

The moon was Artemis, the beautiful crescent-horned huntress, shooting her bright silver arrows everywhere. She followed the chase among the clouds across the evening sky. The stars were her maidens. And all the shining company bathed themselves in the clear lakes and streams.

The clouds were cows, driven to the milking by the summer wind. Or sometimes they were sheep with moist fleeces, slain by the arrows of the sun-god.

The sun was a burning chariot driven westward every day across the sky by yellow-haired Apollo, and drawn by fiery horses none but himself knew how to drive. From this bright chariot Apollo shot the golden ar-

rows which drove away the clouds. Once Phaethon, young son of Apollo, begged that he might drive the chariot for one day. Apollo answered, "None but myself may drive the flaming car of day, not even Zeus whose right hand hurls the thunderbolts. The first part of the way is steep, so that the horses even when they are fresh in the morning can hardly climb it. The middle is high up in the heavens. I myself can hardly, without fear, look down and see the earth and sea stretched beneath me. The last part of the road descends so swiftly that it needs most careful driving. Can you keep the course? It is not easy to guide those fire-breathing horses. Better recall the wish before it is too late."

But Phaethon held to his demand. He covered his head, for the light was so bright that he could hardly endure it. In the East Aurora threw open the purple doors of the dawn, and the maiden Hours brought out the golden chariot and harnessed the

horses. Apollo set the shining rays upon the head of Phaethon and advised him:

"Spare the whip and hold the reins tight. Drive neither too high nor too low, but keep the middle course." The youth sprang into the chariot and grasped the reins with joy. But the horses soon found out that their driver was new to his task. They left the track and dashed about as they pleased. They scorched the stars. They set fire to the mountains. A terrible drought began upon the earth. Many rivers dried up, the trees and grass were withered. Phaethon was afraid and did not know what to do. The earth beneath him was fast being ruined by the heat. Then great Zeus, seeing the trouble, sent a thunderbolt. It hurled Phaethon from the chariot. He fell, like a shooting star, into a great river whose waters cooled his burning frame.

Fire upon earth is a strange thing,—so the Greeks thought. It is always flickering, unsteady, ready to do harm, yet it is

so good a worker for men. The busy spirit of the fire was Hephaestus, who moved with an unsteady gait, being lame. He had his forges on the tops of mountains where volcanos flamed. There he worked, forging the shields of heroes, and the arrows of Apollo and Artemis. With an axe he split open the head of Zeus the Thunderer, and the lightning goddess Athene leaped forth bearing in her hand a shining lance. On her breastplate the Gorgon's head frowned like a thundercloud, and turned to stone, with fear, all those who looked upon it.

The Greeks told their children a story about the changing seasons. Always the flowers had bloomed, and summer had lasted, all the year. One day Persephone, a young girl, was playing in the meadow with her girl companions, when a stranger came driving by, saw her, took her into his chariot, and drove away. When she did not come back, the flowers began to fade and

wither, and the days grew cloudy and sad, mourning her loss. Her mother searched for her all over the earth. At last, not finding her, she went down to the lower world, the world of shadows. And there was Persephone, made queen. For the stranger who had taken her away was Hades, ruler of the lower world. Her mother begged her to come back, but she could not. Hades at last consented to let her live again upon the earth for one half of the year. So after that the flowers bloomed again when she was here, and when she went down to her other home, they died, and it was winter.

The woods, too, had their pretty stories. When Persephone, the lovely Summer, came back and brought the flowers, the people of the woods came out to play. The shepherds seemed to see the laughing faces of dryads peeping from the moving branches everywhere. Dead gnarled and twisted boughs upon the ground looked to them like the legs of dancing satyrs. The horns of goats

half-seen among the trees reminded them of horned Pan, the shepherds' woodland god. They feared to see him, but they often thought they heard the music of his flute far off in the dim forest.

The Greeks called all these story-people gods because they were greater and stronger than themselves. For is not lightning stronger than a man? And no man can change the seasons, or make the spring come in the place of winter.

In their own daily lives, too, the Greeks thought that the gods and goddesses managed things. Athene sent the quick thoughts to men's minds, thoughts that move as rapidly as lightning. Here, wife of the Thunderer, kept watch over homes, to protect them. And the laughter-loving Aphrodite, most beautiful of all the goddesses, made people love one another.

When the gods sent messages to men, Hermes carried them. He came on his winged sandals as swiftly as the wind. He

had wings also on his cap, and wings tipped his snaky staff, by which men knew him. He came to people in their dreams, telling them what the gods wished them to do. Then there were Ares, the god of battles, and Dionysus, god of wine, with vine-leaves in his hair, and many others.

The Greeks built marble temples to their gods. They often went into the temples to pray and offer sacrifices of fowls, or goats, or cattle, or whatever else they had to give. They kindled fires and killed and roasted the animals to please the gods and make them kind. Every god had his favorite animals for sacrifice, as all the people knew. In their daily lives they thought often of the gods. Before starting on a journey they asked the priest in the temple whether the gods favored it. A traveller going through the woods and stopping to drink at a clear spring did not forget to thank the naiad of the place. And no one even drank a bowl

of wine without first pouring out a little in remembrance of the gods.

Homer and the Hero Tales.

The beautiful green valleys of Greece run down between high mountains to the sea. And the sea extends far inland in many places, so that the people living in these valleys have their seaport towns and harbors. In olden times the people of one valley could not very easily go to visit those living in another unless they went around by sea. To do this they built boats. So the Greeks learned to be sailors. And when they had visited the ports of Greece, they ventured to other countries, even as far as Africa and Troy, or Ilios, as the Greeks called the famous city. In those days the sailor's life was full of danger and adventure, such as the Greeks loved especially to hear about. It was a life for strong men. Those who

were strong and brave enough to make long voyages came home with marvelous tales of all that they had seen and done. Many of these storiés are as full of wonders as a dream, so that nobody knows whether such heroes ever really lived. But no doubt the Greeks enjoyed the stories all the more, as we still enjoy them, because they are so full of wonders.

The Greek people loved and admired their heroes, and called them godlike, because of the wonderful things they did. Some of these heroes of whose adventures the people liked best to hear were Heracles, Theseus, Perseus, Jason of the Argonauts, and the heroes of the Trojan war. The stories of their adventures were told in every home. Men called bards went about doing nothing else but singing or telling the well-known hero tales. As they sang, they played chords on the lyre made of tortoise shell which they carried with them.

Perhaps the most beloved of all the bards was Homer, said to have been blind. Homer was an honored guest wherever he went. He could come and go as he pleased, always sure of food, shelter and a warm welcome. He sat in the sunny portico at midday, or by the big square hearthstone in the living room of the house after the evening meal had been cleared away. A circle of eager listeners always gathered about him, ready for the stories.

His poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, were often told, and long after Homer died they were written down in books. They still live for us to read and enjoy, and they will be read as long as children love stories. This book tells the story of the Odyssey, the adventures of the hero Ulysses on his way home from the Trojan war. Odysseus was his name in the Greek language, in which the story was first told. Some of the stories leading up to the story of Odysseus are told here also.

The Story of Paris.

Once upon a time an old shepherd lived in a hut upon a mountain side, not far from the city of Troy. Troy was eastward across the sea from Greece. One morning there came to the old shepherd a strange man from the city, bearing a little bundle in his arms.

"What have you there?" asked the shepherd curiously, for no one had ever brought him anything before. The stranger stepped beside him, and drew down a corner of the bundle's woolen covering. There was a tiny face, all puckered up to cry.

"A child," gasped the astonished shepherd, "But what am I to do?"

"This baby's mother," said the man, "has had a frightful dream. In it she was told that her little son would be a firebrand which would burn the city.

When she told the dream her people took the baby from her. He was given to me to be left out here on the mountain all alone,—poor baby!"

"Too fine a child for the wolves to get," said the old shepherd, thoughtfully.

"So I think," the stranger said, "I have no money to give you, but if you will keep him, you will not regret it, I can promise. He is no common child."

"That I can see," answered the shepherd, "but what if the dream were sent by the gods?"

"If he is to be the firebrand," said the other, "he will be, no matter what we do. No one may escape his fate, not even a king's son." And turning, he went down the hill.

"A king's son," quoth the shepherd opening his eyes. "He shall not die." He carried the baby into his hut.

So the little prince grew up a shepherd and a keeper of cattle. There was

a fine bull in the herd, which he had reared. Upon a day there came some herdsmen by, looking for cattle for the king of Troy. They chose the bull at once, for he was the finest they had seen.

"How will the king use him?" asked the young shepherd.

"As a prize," they answered, "The king will have ten days of funeral games in memory of his son Paris, who would be a man this year if he had lived."

"Take the bull," said the young shepherd, "I will go with him and take part in the games."

So the young shepherd went into Troy with his prize bullock and took part in the games. Many other young men were there. They wrestled, they boxed, they threw the discus, they ran and leaped. And first in strength and skill was the young shepherd. So he won the bullock back again to be his own. As he was leading it away, a servant touched him on the

arm, saying, "The king wishes to speak with you."

In surprise, he hastened back and stood before the king.

"Who are you?" the king asked.

"O king, I am Alexander the herdsman."

"He is that and more, my father," said a woman's voice, and Cassandra, the king's daughter, arose.

"You know I am a seer, although you will not believe me. The gods tell me that this man is Paris Alexander, your own son, sent away from you while only a little babe."

"How is this, boy?" cried the king, "What do you know about it?"

Alexander said, "My foster father told me when I left him, ten days ago. Only so long have I known. You may ask him about it."

The king was greatly moved. Tears stood in his eyes. He arose and laid his hands on the boy's shoulders.

"My son," he cried, "Ah, I am glad. And you are worthy to be a prince."

But Paris stood straight and looked his father in the eyes. "My foster father has been kinder to me. I shall go back to him." He turned proudly and left the king, his father, and went back to his cattle on the hills.

The Story of the Golden Apple.

There was merrymaking on Mt. Olympus, where the great gods lived. High among the clouds the gods were having a gay feast. It was in honor of the wedding of Peleus, a hero, and Thetis, a pretty nymph. There were the Thunderer himself and queenly Here, clear-eyed Athene, laughter-loving Aphrodite, and all the rest. And yet not quite all, for one had been left out. This one was Eris, the dark-browed goddess of trouble and strife. No one wished to invite the

quarrelsome Eris to the wedding. But she was angry and sent trouble enough in her place, trouble that lasted many a long and bitter year. This is how she did it. She took a beautiful golden apple and wrote upon it, "TO THE FAIREST." And as she went by she threw it among the guests. It fell upon the table and lay shining there. The wedding guests were amazed. To whom did it belong? Who was "the fairest?" Some said it should be Here's, others would give it to Athene, and still others said Aphrodite of course was the fairest of them all. And each of the three goddesses, it was plainly to be seen, thought that the golden apple should be hers.

So the feast ended in trouble after all and Eris had her way. But someone must settle the question of the apple. And so it happened that one day, as Paris watched his flock upon the hillside, he suddenly saw before him three fair

women, taller and fairer than any he had ever seen before. They asked him to choose the fairest among them.

"Choose me and you shall have great riches," said Here.

"I promise you the gift of wisdom," said Athene.

"And I," said Aphrodite, "the fairest of all women for your wife." And the rosy-cheeked goddess smiled for she knew already that she had won the apple.

Now the most beautiful of women was Helen. She was the wife of Menelaus, and she lived in Greece, a long way across the sea from Troy. It happened that Menelaus had been visiting the king of Troy. Paris went to the palace of the king his father, saw Menelaus, and was invited to travel over the sea to Greece with him. On the journey they became friends. Paris went with Menelaus to Lacedaemon, and there he found Helen, the fairest woman in the world. It was not

long after, so the story goes, that Paris stole off by night with Helen and all her treasures. They fled together to the sea-shore and sailed away to Troy.

This wrong which Paris did to Menelaus was the real beginning of the ten years' Trojan war. At the end of the war, the Greek soldiers burned the city of Troy. So Paris was indeed the fire-brand which his mother's dream had foretold.

And now we must go back some time, and learn of the promise which Helen's suitors had made to Menelaus when she married him.

THE CHILDREN'S ODYSSEY.

I. Odysseus and Penelope.

The king's palace in the city of Lacedaemon was thronged with young men. They had come from all parts of Greece upon the same errand, the wooing of fair Helen, the King's daughter. Since only one of them could win her, they looked at one another with jealous eyes, and as they restlessly moved about in the courtyard and through the wide doorways, there was not a smiling face to be seen among them.

The aged king had withdrawn to his own rooms in the palace, where he sat behind closed doors, his brow bent in anxious thought. A servant was standing silently before him, awaiting permission to deliver his message.

"Well, Medon, speak," said the king at last.

"Odysseus, the young king of Ithaca, would speak with you."

"If it were any other man I would not see him," said the king, "but let Odysseus enter." The servant left the room.

The great door opened again and a young man, dark and strongly built, entered and stood before the king, who said impatiently:

"Speak, Odysseus, tell me your errand."

"Good king," said Odysseus, "I know you are in trouble. For if Helen is given to any one of us, the others may be jealous and plot to ruin both yourself and him."

The king leaned his head upon his hand in silence.

"Therefore," continued Odysseus, "I have come to present to you a plan. But first let me say this: your daughter Helen, it is true, is the most beautiful woman in the world. But there is one

among her companions, her cousin, Penelope, who has won my heart. If you will gain her father's consent that I may wed this maiden, I promise you relief from all your troubles."

The king's eyes sparkled.

"Odysseus," he said, "if you are telling me the truth, you shall win Penelope. But first let me hear the plan."

"It is this," said Odysseus. "Before you choose a husband for Helen, let all the princes promise that, whoever he may be, they will befriend him and will fight for him and for Helen if ever she is in danger. Each one, hoping that he himself may be the lucky man, will promise eagerly."

"Then," the king added after a moment's thought, "not one of them will dare to plot against us. Odysseus, they call you the Wise King. You have fairly won the name. I will send a messenger at once to call the maiden's father."

But Icarius could not bear the thought of parting with his daughter, whom he dearly loved. At last he said:

"Let Penelope herself decide."

Odysseus followed Icarius through the streets of Lacedaemon to his home. They went in at the wide doorway of the house. Penelope, summoned from her spinning in the inner room, came out to greet them.

"My daughter," said Icarius, "Odysseus loves you. Will you go with him or will you say him nay, and stay with your old father?"

She stood a moment, looking from her father to her lover. Then without a word she drew her veil over her blushing face, and Odysseus knew that his cause was won.

Soon after this Odysseus made Penelope his wife and took her with him to his island home in Ithaca. A brave, fair-haired young chief, named Menelaus, was chosen as Helen's husband and the future king of Lacedaemon. The other princes,

bound by their promise, went peaceably away. A year or two passed by. To Odysseus and Penelope in their happy home there came a little son, whom they called Telemachus, a long name for such a tiny baby.

Spring passed, and summer came and brought a trader's ship to anchor in the bay. The trader himself, a swarthy little man, appeared one day at the palace, laden with his wares. The women of the household gathered around him, while the queen sat near with the baby prince in her arms. The trader spread out jewels, necklaces, bracelets, vases and fans, before them, talking as he worked.

"See this curious flask of alabaster. It has traveled from the far, far East. And here, ah! look at this---a girdle that Queen Helen wore, Helen who has fled from home with the Trojan prince; Helen, the fairest of women—"

"What are you saying?" said the queen quickly, "Helen fled from home?"

"Ay, lady," said the trader, who was fond of gossip. "The young Prince Paris came from Troy and carried her away with him. King Menelaus has sent messengers to your husband. My ship, carrying more sail than theirs, passed them in mid-sea. They will be here tomorrow if the wind holds. But this fine girdle—"

Penelope heard no more. She hurried from the room, her baby in her arms. In the covered porch she stopped, shading her eyes with her hand. The king was walking in the olive-grove. She went to him quickly.

"Odysseus, they say Helen has gone from home with a Trojan prince. Heralds from Menelaus will be here tomorrow to ask aid of you. Oh, do not go away with them!"

Her pleading eyes were full of tears. Odysseus looked at her, then at the baby boy asleep upon her breast.

"I cannot go," he said, "I will not go."

II. Odysseus Plows the Seashore.

It happened as the trader said. On the next day the ship that he had passed came into harbor. On board were two tall Lacedaemonian soldiers, messengers from Menelaus. They hastened through the town to the palace and asked to see Odysseus.

"The king is not here," said a servant maid.

"Where is he?" they asked.

She pointed toward the seashore.

"There, somewhere, I cannot tell." She came nearer to them and whispered, touching her forehead mysteriously,

"He has gone mad."

"Odysseus mad!" they cried. "Impossible!"

They went to look for him along the lonely shore. Far from the town, a league or more, they saw strange traces in the sand. Great heaps of it lay piled up here and there, and between them ran a crooked furrow. As they stood wondering what it meant, they heard a man's voice in the distance, singing a wild, tuneless song. They turned and looked. It was a strange sight. An ox and a horse, yoked together, were dragging a heavy plow through the sand. Behind them walked the king, singing and talking to himself, and sowing handfuls of white salt in the uneven furrow. His hair was disheveled and his eyes were wild. He seemed not to see the

messengers, but passed them by and went on, chanting his crazy song.

They were puzzled.

"He was the keenest and wisest of all the Greeks," said one. "I cannot understand it."

They went back to the palace, each one busy with his thoughts. The queen came out into the great hall to meet them, for as guests they must be treated courteously. Her face was pale and anxious as she welcomed them and bade the servants give them food and drink. She sat by while they ate, but she could hardly force herself to talk with them. Her nurse maid, thinking to cheer her, brought the little babe and laid him in her lap. One of the soldiers looked up from his meal.

"Your son?" he asked.

"Yes," said the queen, smiling faintly, as the baby kicked and crowed.

"Will you lend him to us for a little while?" said the soldier.

"Nay," cried the queen in alarm. "Why should I do that?" She clasped her baby tightly to her breast.

"We will not harm him, I promise you," he said gently. "I wish to show him to his father, that is all."

"I will go with you," said Penelope.

Again they went down to the shore, this time with Odysseus' wife and child. The mad king was still plowing in the sand and singing to himself. While he was yet at a distance, one of the soldiers said, "Now let me take the babe. I promise you I will not harm him."

The queen, with much misgiving, let him take the child into his arms. What was her horror, when she saw him walk to the furrow and lay the baby down in front of the coming plow! She started toward the place, but the other soldier held both her wrists in one strong hand and placed his other hand over her mouth.

"You must not make a sound," he said sternly. She could not move.

Nearer and nearer came the king with his strange team. Now he was close upon the precious bundle lying there. One step more—but no! There is a sudden tightening of one rein; the horse has reared, the slow ox turns to the left, and the little babe is safe.

The soldier loosed his hold of the pale lady. His companion followed Odysseus and stopped him, with a hand on his shoulder.

"You are no more mad than I am," said he. Odysseus turned and looked him in the eye. The trick was discovered.

"You have said it," was his answer.

III. Odysseus at Troy.

Odysseus could no longer refuse to aid Menelaus. He gave his word to the messengers that he would go. Within a month he had gathered together as many men and ships as Ithaca could furnish. Then he bade a very tender farewell to his beloved wife and the baby boy, and set sail with his fleet for Aulis, the appointed meeting place.

The Greeks were up in arms. Every chief who had promised to stand by Menelaus in his hour of need, was either already at Aulis with his followers, or on the way thither. It was a great mustering of brave men. Among them Odysseus was marked for his sturdy frame and soldierly bearing, and for the respect that every warrior paid to his advice. Achilles and Diomedes were two of the bravest, but Menelaus together with his brother Ag-

amemnon, who was called "The King of Men", seemed to be everywhere at once, planning and arranging for the voyage. Agamemnon had been chosen commander-in-chief.

The plan was to sail over the Ægean sea to Troy, capture and burn the city and bring home the stolen queen. They did not dream how great a task it was, or, daring as they were, they might have faltered. In order that they might be granted a prosperous voyage, they made many burnt offerings to the gods, and then the whole fleet of twelve hundred vessels and more than a hundred thousand men sailed out from Aulis, bound for Troy.

It would take too long to tell all the events of that journey and of the war that followed. Troy was a great city. Its walls held out, from month to month and from year to year, in spite of the besieging army, until ten years had passed. The Greek army had suffered greatly from hunger,

cold, pestilence, and discord among the leaders. Many of their chiefs had fallen in battle, among them Achilles' friend Patroclus, who had been killed by Hector. Sometimes it seemed as if they must give up the siege.

One day a company of Trojan soldiers, led by Hector, the bravest of their chiefs, came out from the city and attacked the Greeks; but finding that the latter were too strong for them, the company soon turned and ran back to the city, with the exception of Hector. He stopped outside the gates and faced the enemy alone. He had always felt that he would die in such an encounter, but he fought bravely until he saw Achilles approaching, terrible in his gleaming armor. Then his courage suddenly forsook him, and he fled. Three times around the walls of Troy they ran, Achilles in close pursuit. Each time Hector was driven farther and farther from his friends. At last he stopped and hurled

his spear. It struck Achilles' shield and bounded back. He drew his sword, but Achilles poised his spear and threw it with terrible effect. It struck Hector in the neck and wounded him to death. As he fell he called out faintly,

"Spare my body! Let my father bury me!" But fierce Achilles answered,

"Dog, you did not spare Patroclus; why should I spare you?" So Hector died.

The old white-bearded king of Troy came in person to Achilles and begged for the body of Hector, his beloved son. Achilles at first refused. But the sight of the aged king reminded him of his own father, whom he might never see again, and he relented. A truce of twelve days was declared for Hector's funeral.

The Greeks thought that now, since Hector was slain, the war would soon be over.

Among the high-born Trojan maidens who walked in the funeral procession of

Hector, Achilles saw a daughter of the king who was very beautiful. He went away, but he could not forget her. He said to himself, "She is as beautiful as Helen. I will ask the king if I may marry her."

In the temple of Apollo he found the king. But a treacherous enemy had marked Achilles. While he was asking for the beautiful princess, one of the Trojans shot a poisoned arrow which struck him in the heel, the only part of his body that could be wounded. He was carried back to camp, but within an hour he was dead.

Now indeed the Greeks were in despair. Achilles had been the hero of the army. War began again, and a council was called in Agamemnon's tent.

Nestor, the oldest of the Greeks, arose to speak. The other chiefs sat listening in gloomy silence, when the guard outside saluted, and Odysseus appeared in the doorway. At sight of him the eyes of Menelaus brightened. Nestor continued:

"The army is slowly starving," he was saying. "There is no food except within the city walls. There stand those walls. Why do we not storm them? Achilles is dead. Where are the other chiefs? They are as helpless as babes without him. Shame though it be, we must go home. We are utterly defeated."

Diomedes sprang upon his feet.

"Never!" he cried. "Greece shall not drag her honor in the dust! Have we fought and struggled here for ten long years, only to go home like whipped dogs to their kennel? Great Zeus! Are we not made of better stuff than that? Ah, brothers, we must not lose hope. Let us stay on and fight, as Achilles would have fought, to victory or death!"

Spears clashed on shields in fierce applause. But Odysseus was waiting for a chance to speak.

"I am no orator," he began. "I have no fiery words of eloquence. To my

mind we cannot hope to storm the walls without Achilles. Let us fold up our tents, break camp and let the Trojans know we are going. But listen: we will first build a great monument to Athene. And since the horse is sacred to her, let it be in the form of a monstrous horse, built of wood. And especially" (with lowered voice) "let it be hollow!"

The warriors waited eagerly for the unfolding of the plan. Odysseus continued:

"Diomedes, you and I will take men enough to fill the hollow body of the wooden horse. We will climb in at night, under cover of the darkness. The next day the army will sail off beyond the rocky point, and lie at anchor there. Then we will wait."

They began to understand. Their eyes flashed. They moved restlessly. "Go on," they cried.

"Tell the Trojans it is an offering to Athene, the wise goddess, to help us on

our journey home. They will come out to look at the great horse. They will wonder and question one another. Perhaps they will carry it within the city. If they do—" He stopped. The blackbearded chiefs leaned toward him, breathing hard. "Then we shall see," he calmly finished.

They broke into a tumult.

"No mortal man can accomplish it," cried one.

"What will they do for food?" objected another.

"If someone betrays the plan—" suggested a third.

Odysseus looked sternly around.

"If any man turn traitor, he shall die, so help me all the gods!"

They solemnly promised to keep the plan a secret.

"Odysseus," said Agamemnon, "You give us reason to hope. Our honor and our lives are in your keeping."

"It is a sacred trust," Odysseus answerd.

IV. The Wooden Horse.

The Trojan sentinels looked down in wonder from the towers on the city walls. Something unusual had taken place in the enemy's camp. Every man was busy, some dragging timber from the forest, others hewing it, and still others working at the forges. The distance was too great for the sentinels to see that they were melting down their spears and making bars and nails of them.

They worked night and day, and little by little rose from the ground a huge, strange looking object. No one, not even the Greeks themselves, had ever seen anything like it. It was so tall that even those who watched it from the city walls had to look up to measure its height. Its ponderous legs were like the towers on each side of the city gates. There was room for a small army within its enormous body.

At last it was completed. A festival was held, and with great ceremony the horse was offered to Athene, the wise goddess. That night, under cover of the darkness, Odysseus and Diomedes with their men climbed into the hollow body. In the morning the Trojans were amazed to see the great horse standing alone where the camp had been, while the white sails of the Greek fleet were already far down the bay. Hardly believing their eyes, they ventured out, cautiously at first, then more boldly, as no enemy appeared.

They walked around the wooden horse, examining it curiously. One man struck it with his sword. A groan answered the blow. The people were alarmed. "Come away," they said, "It is an evil thing." But just then a man was discovered lying asleep between the huge fore feet of the statue. They seized him and shook him roughly. "Awake!" they cried, "Who are you?"

Stupefied, and, as it seemed, half dead with fear, he was taken to the king, who questioned him.

"I am a Greek, my name is Sinon," he said. "Odysseus hated me and plotted against me so that they all went away and left me here."

"Tell us about yonder strange beast," said the king, "and we will spare your life."

"The Greeks prayed for a safe voyage home, and this is an offering to Athene," said Sinon. Then he craftily added, "We built it huge and heavy, that you might not take it into Troy, for the priest told us that if it came within the walls, Troy would be free forever and could not be overthrown." The king and his sons looked at each other in joyful surprise.

"The giant horse shall come within the walls of Troy today," they said. But Laocoön, who was a priest, objected.

"Friends, this is dangerous," he warned, "Do we not know enough about the Greeks

to be on guard against them? I, for one, fear them even when they offer gifts. There is some trick about it." He threw his spear against the horse's side. It made a hollow sound, like a groan. The people were afraid. At that moment a young man, with a cry of terror pointed toward the sea. Across the water two great serpents seemed to be gliding toward them. As they came upon the shore the people scattered wildly. Only the priest and his two sons stood upon the steps of the temple, watching them. They came on, up the steps, and wound themselves around the bodies of the priest and his sons, crushing them to death.

This was to the Trojans a sure sign that Laocoön the priest had done a wicked thing in striking the horse that was an offering to Athene. They must take in the offering, or Athene's wrath would fall upon them all as it had fallen upon the priest and his two sons.

So with much labor the huge horse was taken within the gates. The people danced and sang around it and held a great festival in honor of their deliverance and the end of the war.

But there was one other who suspected a trick. At sundown the soldiers inside the wooden horse heard light footsteps without, and a gentle tapping here and there on the horse's side.

"Diomedes! Diomedes!" called a woman's voice. Diomedes was astonished.

"It is the voice of my wife," he whispered. "How came she here?" Then a different voice said, "Odysseus! Odysseus!" But Odysseus listened intently and said nothing. There seemed to be many voices softly calling the heroes' names, one after another. Each man declared that he heard the voice of his wife. Diomedes was so sure of it that he would have answered, "Here am I," but Odysseus quickly put his hand over the soldier's mouth.

No sound came from within the horse. At last a woman, who had been lingering near by, turned away and disappeared down a winding street. It was Helen. But for Odysseus, the warriors would have been betrayed.

Night came on and the moon rose serene and bright over the sleeping city. But Sinon, the Greek spy, had not slept. At midnight he arose, let himself out of the palace, and stole through the silent streets to where the horse stood at the entrance to the temple. He climbed up one of its great legs and with a file cut several nails in its side. The soldiers within pressed against the side, a large opening was made, and one by one they dropped to the ground.

In the vestibule of the temple Odysseus found torches, which he lighted and gave to the soldiers. They hurried through the streets in all directions, setting fire to every house as they went. Before dawn the city

was wrapped in flames. The terror-stricken people rushed out, only to be met by cruel Greeks, who seemed to fill the streets. Confusion reigned everywhere. Some fought, others surrendered, and still others, overcome by fear, ran shrieking and threw themselves among the flames. Only a few escaped, and these were met outside the gates by the rest of the Greek army, who had sailed back in the night to finish the work begun by Odysseus.

So Troy fell, and the wrongs of Menelaus were avenged. The Greeks plundered the rich city of all they could carry away, and Helen, the cause of the war, at last came back to her home.

V. Odysseus Visits the Lotus Eaters

Laden with the wealth of the ruined city, the Greeks formed in companies and marched down to the shore. Although a great number had fallen in battle during those ten years, the army was still so large that it took three days and nights for all to get aboard the ships with their possessions. Odysseus and his men were among the last to leave. They sailed with the wind from Troy to the city of Ismarus, where the Ciconians lived. With the burning of Troy fresh in their minds, the Greeks had no sooner come ashore than they began to sack the city, taking everything of value that they could lay hands upon. Odysseus commanded them to return to the boats, but they refused to obey, and kept on plundering and carousing through the night.

Meanwhile the distressed people, the Ciconians, had sent messengers for aid to

their neighbors in the inland country. In the morning they gathered, thick as leaves in springtime, and fell upon the Greeks. The battle raged all day. The fighting on both sides was desperate. At first the Greeks held off the enemy, but at sundown, outnumbered, they fled to their ships, having lost six men from every crew. They did not leave until they had called aloud three times the name of every missing man. And when no more would come, they sailed away, with aching hearts, mourning for their comrades, but glad to escape complete destruction.

Driven thus from a hostile land back to the unfriendly sea, the Greeks were at the mercy of the weather. A storm which had been gathering overtook them. It drove the ships before it, and stripped the sails into tatters. The sailors lowered them, in terror for their lives. With the oars they brought the boats hastily toward land. They lay inshore two days and

nights until the storm was nearly over. Then hoisting new sail, they started out once more. And now they might have gone straight home, but that the current and the north wind, coming around the southern point of Greece, together were too strong for them. They were driven far out of their course. Perhaps the gods who loved Odysseus were not willing that he should see his home until, by passing through the greatest trials, he had learned to be as ready, brave and wise as any man could be.

The twelve ships, in the power of the north wind, could do nothing but scud along before it. The sailors did not know where they were going. But on the tenth day the air began to grow soft and warm, and a shore appeared where tall palm trees were growing, and grey, moss-hung cypresses sent out their roots like arms into the quiet water. So they landed there, and finding fresh water to drink, prepared their

dinner by the ships. The soft-eyed, dark-skinned natives offered them yellow lotus flowers to eat. This fragrant food was very pleasant to the taste, but the strange thing about it was that it brought forgetfulness to every one who ate it.

No sooner had the Greeks tasted the lotus flowers than they forgot everything that they had ever known before. They forgot the great war, they forgot their wives and children at home, watching so anxiously for their return. They wished for nothing in the world but to stay in that warm country always, eating the sweet lotus flowers and dreaming the days away. They even forgot that Odysseus waited in the harbor, and they might have been drowsing there to the end of their lives if he had not come in search of them. Two by two he dragged them off to the boats, weeping and making a great resistance, and sailed away with them bound fast, hand and foot, beneath the rowers' benches.

Blind Polyphemus at the Mouth of the Cave.

VI. The Giant Polyphemus.

Upon a foggy night, when there was no moon and Odysseus and his men could not tell in what direction they were sailing, they suddenly felt the beach beneath their keels. They had not seen the island nor heard the long waves rolling upon the shore. But they were glad to lower their sails and spend the night upon the quiet beach, happy in thinking that some friendly god had guided them there. As soon as it was dawn, they looked about them and saw a pleasant country, whose dewy pastures and wooded hills invited them to explore it. They took their bows and their long hunting spears from the boats, and made the circuit of the island, killing many mountain goats, which they brought back to the beach. Ten of these they set apart for Odysseus alone. They

spent one whole day roasting and eating the rest, and drinking the wine which they had taken from the Ciconians.

There seemed to be no people living on this island, but as they looked across the water to another one near by, they saw smoke rising from among the trees, and heard the voices of men. That night they rested, but the next morning Odysseus took his own crew with him, and bidding the others wait for him, went to discover who these men might be.

As they beached their boat, the first strange thing they saw, high up on the side of a mountain, was a great dark hole, like the mouth of a cave. It was overhung with laurel bushes. There was a yard around it, with a high wall built of the trunks of trees and filled in with stones. Odysseus told most of the crew to stay by the boat and guard it. He himself, with his twelve trustiest men, began to climb the mountain. They carried a goatskin

bottle of a certain wine which Odysseus had brought from the Ciconian's city.

The mountain side was very steep, but they pulled themselves up by roots and branches, step by step, until they reached the cave. Here, in the half light of the great, roomy cavern, they saw rows of jars full of milk, and crates of cheese. From a far corner bleatings came to their ears.

They went farther in, and as their eyes became accustomed to the darkness, they saw little lambs and kids penned up together. The men begged Odysseus to take some of the cheeses, drive the lambs and kids down to the ships, and sail away. But Odysseus refused, hoping that when the owner came, he would offer them some of the lambs as gifts. So they kindled a fire in the cave, ate some of the cheese, and sat waiting and wondering where the owner was, when suddenly the earth began to tremble. There came a terrible crash that sent them scurrying into the corners.

As soon as they dared to look out, they discovered that a giant had come in, and tossed a great armful of dry wood upon the floor. He was a monstrous fellow, big as a hill, with a beard like a shaggy pine-tree, and only one red eye in the middle of his forehead. A flock of sheep and goats followed him into the cave. He picked up a great stone, so heavy that twenty ordinary men could not have moved it, and set it in the entrance for a door. Then he milked his goats and began to kindle a fire.

The fire-light flickered up and shone upon Odysseus and his comrades. The giant's lone eye glared.

"Who are you?" he thundered. "What are you doing here?" The echoes of his terrible voice rolled and rumbled through the cave. Odysseus mustered courage to tell him that they were going home from Troy, and begged him in the name of the gods to treat them kindly.

"Gods!" roared the giant, "I care noth-

ing for them. Where is your ship?" Odysseus craftily answered that the sea god had wrecked their ship. Without a moment's warning the cruel giant seized two of the men, gobbled them up in a twinkling, took a huge drink of milk, and then lay down to sleep. The sailors wept for their poor comrades, but what could they do? Odysseus longed to draw his sword and stab the giant Cyclops to the heart. But he remembered that all of his men together could not roll away the big stone from the door.

The next morning the giant milked his flocks, drank the milk, and seized two more of the sailors for his morning meal. Then he moved aside the heavy door-stone and drove his flock to pasture in the hills, with many a call. He had not forgotten to replace the stone, doing it as easily as a man would replace the lid upon a quiver.

Odysseus and his men were prisoners, so for occupation they explored the cave.

They found the giant's club, a pole of green olive wood, which he had left beside the fire to dry. It was as large as the mast of a merchant ship of twenty oars. Odysseus cut off about six feet of this, and his men smoothed it down. He himself shaped the end of it by charring it in the fire. When it was ready, they hid it carefully away in a dark corner. The men drew lots to see which four of them should help him to use it.

Toward evening the Cyclops came in again, and drove all his goats and sheep into the cave. Again he lifted the stone and set it down in the doorway. And after he had milked his flock, he laid hands on two more of Odysseus' men and made his supper. Odysseus took some of the sweet wine which he had brought, and which was so strong that no ordinary man could drink it without adding twenty times as much water, and craftily said:

"Giant, will you taste of this, and see what good wine we had in our ships?"

The giant drank it all and liked it so well that he said he would give Odysseus the stranger's gift, and asked him his name. For it was the custom in those times for a man to give some present, called "the stranger's gift," to every guest he entertained.

"My name is No-man," said Odysseus, "what present have you for me?" But the giant only kept pouring down the wine as fast as Odysseus brought it to him, until at last he could only grumble drowsily,

"I will not eat you up until the last; that is your stranger's gift," and with those words he fell back fast asleep.

Odysseus might well have been terrified by the prospect of seeing all his comrades eaten up before him. But he had no time to think of that; now was his chance. He brought the pole from its hiding place, and drove it underneath a heap of embers to make it hot. Then with the help of his men he lifted it and poised it above the

one eye of the sleeping giant. Another moment, and the giant was blind. Such a roar he raised that the whole earth trembled, and the sailors ran and hid themselves. From without in the dark night came voices of his neighbor-giants shouting, "What is the matter, Polyphemus? Is some one murdering you?" Polyphemus answered, "No-man is murdering me!" Whereupon they said, "If no man harms you, then we cannot help you. Pray to your father Poseidon." And thinking that the gods had driven Polyphemus crazy, they went back to their caves among the windy hills.

In the morning blind Polyphemus sat guarding the doorway with his outstretched hands. Odysseus had gathered some of the willow twigs on which the giant slept, and going silently among the flock, tied the rams by the horns in groups of three. Under the body of each middle ram he bound one of his men. Last of all,

he crawled underneath the biggest and strongest of the flock, and twisted his hands firmly in its fleece.

The sheep ran out to pasture, and as they went, their master felt their backs and counted them, never suspecting what precious burdens they were carrying. When the big ram came last, he grumbled,

"What, my pet ram! Why are you the last? You always were the leader, going out and coming in. Ah, but you miss your master's eye. If you could only tell me where that villain is hiding, I would dash him in pieces on the ground. I would repay him for this pain!" So saying, he let the ram go past.

Outside, at a distance from the cave, Odysseus dropped to the ground, unbound his comrades, and they ran down to the shore. Driving the sheep along with all the speed their fear could lend, they tossed them into the ships, and climbed in after them. When they were as far away as one could call, Odysseus shouted,

"Polyphemus, when they ask you who put out your ugly eye, say it was Odysseus, king of Ithaca!" Polyphemus was so angry when he heard it and knew they had escaped, that he threw great rocks into the sea and even tore off the top of a hill and flung it after them. And in his rage, he prayed to his father, the sea god:

"Poseidon, my father, never let Odysseus reach his home. Or if he ever does, let it be only after losing everything he has." Now the rock that he had thrown fell so near the boat that the swirling of water nearly washed them back to shore. In his rage Polyphemus sent another hill-top flying after the sailors. But this fortunately drew the big waves back to sea again, and the boat with them. To this day the coast looks as if an earthquake had been there

TURNER, PINXT.

THE ANGER OF POLYPHEMUS.

"And to this day the coast looks as if an earthquake had been there."

VII. Æolus and the Bag of Winds.

Somewhere, far out at sea, there lies a beautiful island, where the winds come home to rest when they are tired of blowing. Since this island is never still, but floats about like a ship on the water's breast, few people have ever found it, and those only by chance. Its cliffs rise high and steep out of the sea, and all about it is an unbroken wall of bronze.

One day the stormy north-east wind was blowing his way home across the sea. Happening upon the boats of Odysseus with their crews, he swept them away out of their course, to the floating island.

Here, with twelve sons and daughters, lived King Æolus, who ruled the winds —a merry, blustering, kind-hearted fellow. When he found that the strangers whom the north-east wind had brought were the great chief Odysseus and his followers, he

kept them with him for a month, feasting them every day. When the time had come for them to go away, he caught all the storm-winds and put them into a strong bag of ox-hide, and tied them with a silver cord so that not one might escape. Calling Odysseus aside, he gave them into his keeping. Only the gentle south wind he left outside to blow the sailors home.

They sailed nine sunny days, and on the tenth they were so near to Ithaca that they could see men tending fires along the shore. Odysseus, who had been pilot night and day, lay down to rest. Meantime the sailors began to whisper together about all the gold and treasures which Æolus must have given Odysseus in that leather bag. First one and then another stole up to the bag and felt of it. Glancing at his neighbor, one would say:

"See how Odysseus gathers gifts wherever he goes, while we, who toil as hard as he does, come home empty-handed.

Let us find out how much there really is." Finally they all gathered around the bag, and one, with many a glance over his shoulder at the sleeping Odysseus, stooped and untied the knotted cord.

With a terrible roar, the long-prisoned winds rushed out, furious at their bondage. Back they swept to their island, driving the boats along. Odysseus, awakened by the noise, sprang up. He had only to look at the empty bag and the fear and dismay on the guilty faces about him, to know what had happened. He was so bitterly disappointed at his crew's disloyalty that he debated in his own mind whether he would not throw himself overboard and put an end to his troubles. But then he thought of his home, of his beloved country, his dear wife and boy, and his courage returned to him.

When they had come to the island of Æolus again, he went with two companions to the king. The three were so

ashamed that they would not enter the great hall of the palace, but sat down in silence by the door, like common beggars. At last the king heard their story, and his merry face grew stern. He said:

"A man whose trusted companions turn against him must have done some wicked thing, so that the gods despise him. Go! I will do nothing more for you."

They turned away disappointed, although they knew that they had deserved nothing better from the king. And now they knew not where to look for aid.

VIII. The Man-eaters.

Since in their disobedience they had opened the leather bag, the sailors were now tossed about by every wind that blew; so that when at last they found a quiet harbor, they were glad to enter and seek shelter there. Eleven of the boats rode on and cast their anchors near the shore. Odysseus alone stayed outside in the open sea and moored his boat by a high rock, which he climbed to the top.

Below him in the harbor, his beautiful fleet was anchored. Here and there on land little rifts of smoke arose from among the trees. He saw three men start out from one of the crews, to discover who lived here. The three followed a well beaten path down toward the town. They met a very tall young woman, filling her pitchers at a spring. In answer to their questions she pointed to her father's house

among the trees. And when they had entered there, they found a woman even larger than the one they had met. At sight of them she gave a fierce cry, like a lioness calling to her mate. She was answered by a loud noise at the door, and the giant king came in, seized one of the men with a growl, and opened his huge mouth as if to eat him. The others fled without waiting to see what happened to their comrade, and had hardly reached the shore when all the rest of the Man-eaters came thundering down from the hills carrying great rocks, which they hurled crashing into the harbor. The boats were splintered, and the giants speared the drowning men as if they had been fish, and carried them off.

Odysseus, who had watched all this from his rock, now made haste to return to his boat without the harbor. Knowing that he could not help them, he cut his

cables and put out to sea—one lonely boat, where twelve had ridden in so gallantly but a few hours before.

IX. Circe and the Swine.

Odysseus and his men, in their one remaining ship, remembering the cruel Cyclops and the fierce Man-eaters, had become cautious about landing on unknown shores. One day, when they had entered a strange harbor, they found that none of them dared to leave their boat, although they could discern no sign of any living thing on shore.

Their store of food, however, was fast growing less. Odysseus took his sword and spear and went ashore. From a high hill which he had climbed to get a distant view, he saw smoke rising through the trees. He started back, and on the way killed a large deer that leaped across his pathway. He made a rope of woven willow twigs and tied the legs of the deer together so that he could carry it. With the heavy carcass on his back, he returned

slowly to the ship, leaning on his spear. He gladly threw it down before the boat.

"Let us feast while we may, comrades!" his voice rang out, "for none of us will die before his time." The men were cheered by the words and by the sight of the great deer, and so they came ashore and had a glorious feast. But on the following day they were as hungry as before. As a last resource, they cast lots to see who should go for aid. Odysseus divided the crew into two companies, putting Eurylochus, a brave soldier, at the head of one, while he himself took command of the other. Then he took two pebbles, a black one for himself and a white one for Eurylochus, and put them in a helmet. Round and round he spun the helmet very fast, and the little white stone flew out. So Eurylochus must go.

Sadly enough the little company started, for they did not know whether they should ever return. But as they traversed

the fresh meadows and fragrant groves their spirits revived. "Surely," they said, "someone must live in this beautiful spot."

As they went farther and farther, they noticed that every sound had ceased. The little birds had peeped more and more softly, and now were still. Not a leaf stirred in the great trees all about them. The running brook made no more noise than if it had been frozen. Eurylochus began to grow alarmed, and was about to urge their return to the ship, when suddenly a vista opened out before them.

Through a rift in the interlacing boughs, they saw a palace, crystal white, as fairylike as frostwork on a winter morning. They stopped, breathless with wonder, and at that moment the silence was broken by a strange, sweet song, like a burst of sunshine. Instantly the birds began to twitter, the branches rustled softly, and the little brook talked to itself in a low voice.

All of this was very strange, but imagine their surprise when fierce-looking beasts with noiseless tread, tigers, wolves and spotted leopards came out of the forest, wagging their long tails and fawning like dogs, and followed them in the direction of the palace. Eurylochus did not feel safe with this unusual following, but the cheerful song still sounded. And the sailors were very hungry. "Someone is singing at the loom," they said. "It is either a woman or a god. Let us call." Without waiting for commands, they rushed to the entrance and clamored for admittance. The wide door folded back and they all heedlessly went in except Eurylochus, who feared some snare.

But the sailors thought themselves in luck. There before them was the most beautiful woman that they had ever seen. Her hair was like the sun. She it was who had sung the magic song. And what was even more to their liking, a glorious feast

was spread, with plenty of inviting chairs and couches. Circe herself made them a drink of barley, cheese and honey, mixed with Pramnian wine—and Circe only knew how many magic drugs beside.

They sat down without delay, and then it seems, they forgot their manners. They ate and drank and kept on eating and drinking until it seemed as if they would never stop. Circe, the beautiful woman, sat by with her maidens and watched them. Her face began to change from its bright smile to a threatening expression. Yet her blue eyes had a mischievous twinkle, too.

At last she arose with a long, shining wand in her hand, like a ray of sunshine, and pointed it slowly at each one of them. Then, what a terrible change was there! They began to be bristled all over, and their voices, husky with eating, did not sound like human voices at all, but more like grunts and squeals from the pig-pen!

CIRCE CHANGING THE SAILORS INTO SWINE.

"You no longer deserve to be men, least of all princes," cried Circe. "Off to the sties, where you belong!" And off they had to go, a drove of ugly, grunting swine! Circe flung them acorns and chestnuts to eat, and they fell over one another in their haste to get them, just as greedy pigs do in the pen.

Eurylochus waited and waited in the marble portico, and knew nothing of what had happened. When a drove of swine ran past him, he hardly noticed them, so busy was he with wondering why his men did not come back. He dared not enter the enchanted palace alone, so he returned to Odysseus.

The sailors listened in wonder while Eurylochus told his story. There was much talking among them as to what it was best to do. Odysseus, however, took his silver-studded sword and his spear and told Eurylochus to show him the way. But the latter said:

"Oh, do not send me there again. It is sure death. Let us put out to sea!"

Odysseus answered with a frown:

"No. Stay here by the boats if you are afraid, but I must go and find my men."

He went off alone into the forest. Yet he did not journey very far alone, for on the way he met a bright-faced youth who took him by the hand like an old friend.

"You are brave," he said, "if you think to free your comrades. How do you know that you will not fare as badly as they?"

Odysseus did not reply, but looked at the young man in admiration, for he was very winning. The stranger continued with a smile, "Since you are brave and wise, Odysseus, I will give you a charm." He looked about on the ground, hunting for something. He stooped and picked a little white flower that lifted its pretty cup at their feet.

"Here it is," he said. "Now, Circe

HERMES GIVING ODYSSEUS THE MACIC FLOWER.

will try to enchant you. She will put drugs into your wine to make you lose your wits. But if you will keep this little flower safe, she cannot harm you. Farewell!"

He turned and went away so lightly that he hardly seemed to touch the earth. Odysseus knew, by the flutter of tiny wings at his feet, that he was Hermes, the swift messenger of the gods.

In spite of this encouragement, however, his mind grew dark with fear as he stood before the palace gate and called. The shining door opened, and Circe herself appeared and led him in. She knew that this was the great Odysseus, famed for his cunning and his wisdom, and she wished to try her spells upon him. So she welcomed him graciously, and bade him sit and rest. She placed a beautiful silver-studded chair for him, and began to mix him a drink in a cup of gold.

The marble hall was richly beautiful,

but Odysseus saw nothing of it. As he sat there with bowed head, thinking of his comrades, he kept watch of Circe from the corner of his eye. He saw her pour a strange liquid into the cup which she presently gave him with a charming smile. He pressed the little white flower hard as he drank. Then Circe pointed her shining rod at him and cried:

"Off to the sty, and lie there with your fellows!" But Odysseus, instead of obeying, drew his sword and sprang toward her. She fell upon her knees with a cry of fear:

"Ah, Odysseus, do not kill me! I knew that you would come; now stay with me! I will not harm you." So she tried to disarm him with her gentleness. But he pressed the little flower again, and holding his sword over her, said sternly:

"Swear that you will aid me and never do me harm." Circe swore it, for she feared and loved Odysseus, because he

was stronger and wiser than herself. But Odysseus could not rest until he knew that his comrades were in safety.

"If you will have me stay," he said, "then set free my men and let me see them."

Circe went to the gates of the sty and opened them. As the swine ran out, grunting and squealing, she waved her wand over each. The ugly hair vanished; the long snouts shortened; the little eyes grew large and full; and lo, they stood up like men—they were men, taller and more comely than before! In a moment they were crowding around Odysseus and embracing him, while tears rolled down their cheeks for joy at escaping such a dreadful fate.

Then Odysseus called the sailors from the boats, and they all came, even Eurylochus, who was ashamed to stay behind, although he did not yet feel sure that they

were safe. Circe gave them a grand feast, at which they all behaved with better manners than before.

X. The Shadow Land.

It was so pleasant to stay at the wonderful shining palace of Circe that a year passed swiftly by before Odysseus said to his companions, "Let us go on our way again."

Circe declared that only one person could tell them the right way. That person was Tiresias.

"But he is dead," they cried.

"He is, and you must go to the land of the dead and talk with him," said Circe. Alas! Odysseus, though a hero, was almost discouraged by such a task. However, Circe gave him many instructions, and he put to sea. There was nothing else to be done.

A long way they went, scudding before the wind for many leagues—a cruise no ship had ever made before—until at last, in the dark of the moon, they came to the Shadow

Country. Odysseus with two companions walked along the shore until he found a rock of which Circe had told him, where two rivers met. There he dug a pit in the black earth, and sacrificed two sheep which he had driven from the boat. He let the blood of the sheep fall into the dark pit. Also he poured in honey, wine, water and barley meal, for offerings to the dead. Then, with his sword unsheathed, he waited silently.

A lonely wind was murmuring in the pine-trees. Down in the meadows the dim white mists began to move and dip and curl themselves into shapes, old men with long white beards, and little children, maidens in bridal veils, and soldiers stained with the blood of their last battle.

They floated toward Odysseus on the wind, and hovered about the pit, eager to taste the offerings. But Odysseus held his sword above the pit and kept them away until he saw the one he came to see

ODYSSEUS IN THE LAND OF SHADOWS

—Tiresias, a blind and aged man, whose hoary beard reached almost to his knees.

"Tiresias!" called Odysseus. Tiresias came nearer, tasted the offerings and answered solemnly:

"Odysseus, your journey home will be made hard. You will suffer for the blinding of Polyphemus. His father, the sea-god, will be your enemy until the end."

Tiresias told him many things which he must do upon the journey home, and then he passed away into the night and Odysseus put away his sword and let the other shadows come. First among them was his own mother. His heart thrilled when she told him how she had died broken-hearted because he had not come home from Troy. He tried to clasp her in his arms, but she gave him one sad look and flitted away.

Three other mothers came and tasted the honey; first the mother of Heracles, who was the strongest man that ever lived;

then Leda, mother of the the twins, Castor the horseman, and Pollux the boxer; and Iphimedeia, the mother of those two giants who grew to be so tall that they piled the mountains up and tried to climb higher than the sky. Beautiful Ariadne was there too, whom Theseus tried to carry off to Athens, and whom a cruel goddess slew.

Of the heroes of the war came Agamemnon, king of men. He wept when he saw Odysseus, and eagerly stretched out shadowy hands to greet him, telling him the sad story of his cruel death by the hand of his wife, Clytemnestra. Great Achilles came, longing to be back on earth again. But mighty Ajax stood apart, with angry eyes, for he had died of grief because Odysseus threw him in a wrestling match. Even now his proud heart would not let him speak, although Odysseus called to him.

Orion, the mighty hunter, with his

huge bronze club that never could be broken, came hunting the shadows of the deer. And standing neck-deep in a pool, whose waters rushed away whenever he tried to drink, was Tantalus, the saddest figure of them all. Odysseus wept to hear his cries, as he struggled to reach the tempting fruit clusters which hung always just a finger's length beyond his grasp. This was his punishment for trying to deceive the gods.

Sisyphus rolled up his heavy stone, that always tumbled down the hill again, and told his story to Odysseus. Then came the great Heracles himself. He wore a wonderful girdle of gold on which were pictured his twelve labors, the killing of the lion, the hydra, the two-headed dog, and all the rest.

"Odysseus," he said, "you are working out a task as hard as mine was. Keep on with it—I finished mine." So saying he passed away. And still the shadows came.

Odysseus heard their various stories with such sympathy that at the end he almost thought that he had been through it all himself—had joined in the endless toil of Sisyphus, had starved with Tantalus, or had struggled in the fight with the hydra of the hundred heads. He could endure no more. Trying to keep in mind all that Tiresias had said, he turned back from the dark pit and made his way toward his ship. And so he left the shadow country.

XI. The Sirens.

Out in mid-ocean lies an island where the winds never blow. For leagues around, the air is heavy with the breath of flowers, and the water is so still that the clouds can see their faces in it. On this island, in a flowery meadow, sit a band of Sirens. The song they sing makes every man who hears it wish to follow it. When his boat lands there, the cruel Sirens take him prisoner for life.

Into this dangerous neighborhood, one fair morning, came the homeward bound ship of Odysseus, floating double, boat and shadow, on the still water's breast. Odysseus, whom Circe had warned against the Sirens, felt danger in the air and planned accordingly. Among the stores he had found a piece of beeswax. This he rolled and kneaded for some time between his hands. When it was soft

enough, he cut it in bits and with them stopped the ears of his men. But he, the hero, must endure everything. He wished to hear the magic song. He did not trust himself, however, but had his sailors bind him to the mast securely, hand and foot.

Nearer and nearer they approached the island. Very softly and sweetly the Sirens' voices called to the man at the mast:

"Come hither, great Odysseus, whom the whole world praises. Bring in your ship, and listen to our song! For we can give you even greater wisdom, since we have knowledge of all things that happen in the world."

He bore it bravely for some time. At first the sound was only very pleasant. Then little by little, as they called to him more and more bewitchingly, it seemed that he must go. "But I will not," he said manfully. Yet they kept calling, calling, calling, and now he could hear nothing

THE SONG OF THE SIRENS.

but their voices. The air was filled with them; he grew dizzy, and a thousand furies within him seemed tugging to undo his bonds. With a despairing cry, he signed to the crew to let him go. But they, as he had told them to do, only bent to the oars and rowed faster, while two of them laid more cords on him and drew them tighter —until the wicked Sirens' song grew faint in the distance and then died away.

XII. The Dangerous Channel.

And now a graver peril lay in wait for them. The way that they must go led through a channel so narrow that there was hardly room for the boat to pass. On each side there was a terrible danger, so that the sailors should have had eyes on all sides of their heads, if they were to guard against both these dangers at once.

While they were yet far away they began to feel the onward motion of the current drawing them into the channel. The booming of the surf came out to them, and they could see white clouds of spray dashed high in the air. About them on every side were strewn the shattered timbers of ships. The frightened sailors wondered into what region of death they were being driven. They became so afraid that they stopped rowing. Odysseus talked to them, saying that they could not be in

greater danger than when the Cyclops had shut them in his cave. And as they had escaped then, by keeping their courage and knowing what to do, so they should come through this danger safely. And they heeded him.

Circe had told Odysseus not to arm himself, saying that he would need a pilot rather than a sword. But he was a soldier, and he felt more at ease with his two spears in hand. Thus armed, he stood in the boat's prow and watched for the unknown dangers.

As the boat was drawn by the swift current into the channel, the roar of the surf deepened to a deafening tumult, in the midst of which it was impossible even to think. The water all around was dark and streaked with foam. On one side a rugged cliff rose straight up to a towering height. Its sides were black and smooth. Somewhere in this frowning rock Scylla, the long-armed monster, had her cave.

Odysseus scanned the cliff up and down its treacherous sides, but as yet she was nowhere to be seen. On the opposite side from Scylla's crag was the hissing, boiling whirlpool of Charybdis. There the water whirled more and more swiftly until down in the middle the sailors could see the dark sand at the very bottom of the sea. Then slowly the whirlpool filled again, until it spouted the water high, dashing the spray over the tops of the tall cliffs. So it kept whirling on forever.

The sailors, gazing into the fearful whirlpool, were trembling with terror lest they should be swallowed up in it, when Scylla, from the opposite cliff, reached down her six long arms and snatched six sailors, vainly struggling, and drew them up in to her cave. It was a fearful sight.

Before she could come back again, a fortunate gust of wind had reached the boat and carried it safely through the channel, but with the loss of six good men.

The roar of Charybdis and the hoarse barking of Scylla sounded in their ears for many a long league.

XIII. The Sungod's Cattle.

Odysseus remembered that among other things, the blind prophet had warned him to keep away from the cattle of the sun, for there was danger where they were. Odysseus did not know where these cattle were at pasture. One day not long after they had passed the channel of the two dangers, as they were sailing near a pleasant shore, the bleating of sheep and lowing of cows came to them from the hills. Now, although Odysseus was not sure of it, this was indeed the Island of the Sun, the island we call Sicily. There the Sun loved best to shine, and there he kept his beautiful broad-browed cattle and his sturdy sheep. Odysseus urged his men to speed past the island without stopping. But they were tired with rowing, and Eurylochus spoke for them in a surly way:

"You may be made of iron, Odysseus, but we are not. We want to stop here and rest; and we are hungry too. If we should keep on rowing through the night. a storm might come and dash us all to pieces." Then all the sailors mutinied, and cried:

"Eurylochus is right. We will go no farther."

Odysseus, only one against so many, gave way, but only after they had promised him that if they found cattle grazing on the hills, or in the woods, they would not harm a single one of them. "For if you do," said he, "the sun god in his anger will surely destroy you."

They moored their boat in the harbor, near a stream of fresh water. And after they had made their supper, they lay down to sleep. In the third watch of the night there came a tempest. They beached the boat in the early morning, fearing that the storm might carry it away.

"Now, comrades," said Odysseus, "we have food in plenty on the boat. Let us remember to spare the cattle of the great sun god, who sees and hears all things."

And they cried, "Yes, yes, we will."

But all that month the south winds blew, and they could not put to sea, for the south winds would not take them home. So long as they had food, they spared the cattle, because they loved their lives. But at last their food was gone, and they were very hungry. Near by in the forest roamed the herd of broad-browed, beautiful cattle, the favorites of the sun god.

One morning Odysseus, sad at heart, went away alone, to think what he might do, and to pray to the gods to help him in his trouble. While he was gone Eurylochus, the rebel, began to talk to the crew. He said that it was hard enough to die in battle, where a man might win a glorious name; but to perish miserably

THE SLAUGHTERING OF THE SUN GOD'S CATTLE.

of hunger was surely the unhappiest fate of all.

"Then," said he, craftily as he thought, "let us take a few of these cattle, and sacrifice them to the gods. And if ever we reach Ithaca again, we will build the sun god a rich temple and so atone to him for doing him this wrong. And even if he should be angry and destroy us, it is better to die quickly in the open sea than slowly starve."

So his companions, only too ready to be persuaded, drove off the best of the fine cattle, and killed and roasted them. Odysseus, returning, saw the smoke along the shore and smelled the roasted meat. He groaned with rage and grief, for he knew what they had done.

"O Father Zeus," he cried, "and all ye other gods! Ye let me lie asleep while they did this!" For he had fallen asleep a little while. He sternly rebuked the men, each one in turn, but then it was too

late. The cattle were killed. The sailors feasted upon them as long as they dared, but all the time they were afraid. The skins of the slain beasts seemed to them to crawl and the flesh to groan.

They hastily put to sea in fear of the penalty, which came swift and sure. A storm arose more terrible than any they had ever known. The waves grew mountain-high. The wind howled like the voice of the angry sun god himself. Lightning struck the ship and tore it into a thousand splinters. The sailors had no more strength than little birds before the tempest. One by one they sank into the sea.

Odysseus alone clung to the broken mast of his boat, while the deadly winds drifted him back toward the dangerous channel. Crash! crash! went the breakers, and tossed him high in the air. He gave one cry to the gods for aid. The friendly branches of a fig tree that overhung the

whirlpool caught him as he fell. There he clung, as a bat clings under the eaves, until he saw the boat's mast coming up again out of the whirlpool. Then he let go hands and feet, dropped, caught the mast and held to it, and little by little drifted out of danger.

XIV. Calypso and the Raft.

Flowers were always blooming upon the island where Calypso lived. And Calypso herself was like a flower, though a poisonous one. At first sight she seemed very beautiful, with her fair hair and her starry eyes, but afterward, — well, we shall see.

The most beautiful spot in the island was Calypso's cave. Trees grew around it, alder, and poplar, and fragrant cypress, where long-winged sea-birds built their nests. Clear water rippled down from springs near by, and kept the meadows green. On every side soft beds of violet and sweet mint blossomed in dreamlike stillness. The cave itself was cool and shadowy and overhung with nodding vines. From somewhere deep within it came the fragrance of burnt sandalwood and cedar.

Since the beauty of the place and of Calypso might have tempted even the gods to stay, it was no wonder that Odysseus, tired of drifting about on a spar of his wrecked ship, said when he landed here, "It is so restful—I will stay a little while."

Time went by, and the little while grew seven long years. He was not happy, for he wanted to be up and going. But he had grown so used to living lazily, with every wish fulfilled, that he could not think of any plan to get away. Every day he went out and walked alone along the shore, clad in enchanted garments given to him by Calypso, and gazed long and earnestly across the water toward Ithaca. What a welcome sight would have been the white wings of a ship! But ships never came that way. Day after day Odysseus shed the bitter tears of home-sickness.

However, he knew that he would never get away by sitting still and weeping

He thought of his wife and little son in far-away Ithaca, and then he thought of the charm which had held him here for seven long years, like a slave. He came to himself at last, and hated Calypso heartily. Now she seemed hideous to him, so that he could not bear to look at her. And day by day he longed more for his home. Then something happened.

Calypso, one fair day, sat spinning in her cave and singing a magic song. A shadow fell in the doorway. She turned and saw a figure that she knew, for the gods know one another, although they live in various distant places.

"Calypso," said the messenger, "you must let Odysseus go, and do it quickly. Athene, the wise goddess, sends you word." He vanished, with a flash of tiny wings—for he was Hermes,—and Calypso bent her head upon her knees and shuddered. She wished to keep Odysseus always, but she dared not disobey. She

went down to the water's edge and found him.

"Dry your tears," said she, "for you are going home. Come, build yourself a raft, and I will help you."

Odysseus could not believe her words. Still looking seaward, he said bitterly,

"Why do you mock me? I will not go upon the cruel sea in a frail raft unless you swear that you are not plotting for my ruin."

Calypso declared that she was not, and that she only pitied him. Once more, however, she offered him temptation. If he would only stay, she said, he would be young and strong forever, like the gods. And if he could know the troubles yet before him in going, he would surely stay. He only said,

"I have had troubles. The thought of them no longer frightens me. I will go home." Then Calypso knew that she had no more power over him.

She went with him to the forest and showed him where all the finest timbers were, and gave him tools to work with. Odysseus cut down twenty trees, from those that were dryest, so that they would float. He then trimmed them with an axe, smoothing them skillfully, until they were all of the same size. Then with an augur he bored holes in each, and fastened them together with pins and crossbeams. Along the sides he raised a sort of gunwale, made of many standing pieces, with long timbers laid along the top. He shaped one of the straight logs into a mast, and hung a yard-arm on it, to support a sail. He made a rudder, too, to steer the raft. And then he caulked the whole raft on the under side, with willow strips, to keep the water out. Calypso brought him cloth to make a sail and this too he made easily and well.

On the fourth day all was finished. Calypso put upon the raft a goatskin bottle

CALYPSO TEMPTING ODYSSEUS TO STAY.

of water, and one of wine, and a sack filled with food,—things that she knew he liked. Odysseus, using poles for levers, pushed the heavy raft down to the water. As it was launched, he leaped aboard and spread his sail before the breeze. And so with a high heart he bade farewell forever to the island of Calypso.

XV. The Sea Bird's Gift.

Alone on his raft, Odysseus kept fearlessly before the wind. At night he steered by the northern star, and each day by the sun. He met no ships; only the white gulls kept him company, wheeling by on their strong wings and calling to him plaintively. At last, far away, like a bright shield laid flat upon the dark and misty sea, he saw the country of Phaeacia. But just at that time someone saw him,—Poseidon, god of the ocean. Remembering the blinding of Polyphemus, who was the sea god's son, Poseidon said, "This man must not escape so easily." So he stirred the deep sea waters, unchained the winds, and gathered the frowning clouds, and there was a great tempest.

Now, for once, Odysseus was afraid. The waves rose and broke over him, and whirled the frail raft madly round and

round. The canvas was quickly torn away in the furious wind. The mast snapped and struck him as it fell. In a moment he was struggling in the cruel waves. Even the bravest soldier shrinks from such a wretched death. His clothing dragged him down at first, but it was soon stripped from him. Then he came up, spent but struggling, and laid hold of the raft. It tossed like thistledown in the whirlwind. But suddenly he saw a sea bird perched upon it, bearing in her bill a long strip of something like seaweed.

"Poor wanderer," she said, "Poseidon shall not destroy you. Take this girdle and strike out for land." And she was gone. Odysseus debated with himself:

"Is this bird another god, plotting to do me harm? The land is near; I will stay on the raft as long as it holds together. If it goes down, then I will swim." As he thought thus, Poseidon raised a great dark wave with bending crest, and hurled it on

him. The logs of the raft scattered like straws before the wind. But Odysseus, striding a log as if it were a horse, quickly spread the band of seaweed beneath his breast, and plunged into the sea. It was a desperate fight, but slowly and painfully he was drawing near the shore. Borne up on a great swell, he even saw it. When he was as far from it as a man's voice would travel, he heard the booming of the surf upon the rocks. But no landing place appeared. The rocky shore was steep and high. A wave rolled over him and threw him up against the sharp-edged rocks, where he had barely sense enough to cling, bruised and shaken, until the next wave swept him off again. With a great effort he swam out beyond the rocks, and along the shore, until he felt the current of a river. A faint prayer to the river god rushed from his heart. And as the gods help those who help themselves,

he found himself at the mouth of a quiet stream where landing was an easy matter.

For a long time he lay panting and exhausted, with a great weariness upon him; but at last his dauntless spirit returned. He took off the sea bird's girdle that had saved him, and threw it back into the sea where she could find it. Then he lay down and kissed the earth, for joy at being still alive.

But Odysseus had no clothing, and he was shivering with cold.

"What shall I do?" he thought, "I shall freeze if I stay here by the water in this wind. And if I go up the hill and sleep in the woods, some wild beast may find me." Yet he did go into the woods. And there he found two olive bushes growing side by side, so close together that their leaves and branches made a thicket which sun and wind and rain could not get through. Odysseus crept beneath these bushes. He scraped together a warm

bed of their dry fallen leaves, of which there were enough to shelter several men. He lay down in the soft leaves, and heaped them over him until he was quite hidden. And very quickly he was fast asleep, weary and half-drowned, but never yet discouraged.

ODYSSEUS SHIPWRECKED.

XVI. Nausicaa's Washing.

In Phaeacia there lived a beautiful girl whose name was Nausicaa. Her father was the king, and so she was a princess. In those days princesses were not ashamed to work with their hands. One morning Nausicaa awoke and remembered that all her pretty clothing needed washing. She went to her father and whispered in his ear,

"Papa dear, could you have the wagon harnessed for me,—the high one with the good wheels,—to take my pretty clothing to the river to be washed? You need fresh clothing for the council meetings, too. And my brothers are always wanting their garments clean for the dances."

Her father smiled, and the princess knew that her request was granted, so she gathered her clothes together. Her mother, the queen, gave her a basket of good things to

eat, and she and her maidens went out together to the courtyard. There Nausicaa climbed into the two-wheeled cart and took the reins. With a crack of the whip and a clatter of hoofs they were off, the handmaids tripping gaily along beside the cart. Through the wide gateway and out past the town they followed the winding road to the riverside. There by the spring, where the washing pools were always full, they stopped, unhitched the mules, and turned them out to browse in the sweet clover.

They carried the clothing to the pools and stamped it with their bare feet to cleanse it, each one trying merrily to be the first to finish.

The washing done, and the clothes spread on the bank to dry in the warm sun, they all went bathing in the river. How deliciously cool the water was! They played in it like river nymphs, and splashed it in one another's faces. When they had had enough of this, they dressed and ate

their lunch, and had a lively game of ball. The wind tossed their long hair about. The woods across the river echoed to their merry peals of laughter.

Nausicaa, who could throw the ball farther than any of the others, threw it a little too far at last. It missed the girl who stood upon the bank, and rolled beyond her into the water. They all screamed, as girls will do; but in a moment they had all turned and fled as silently as frightened deer. For there before their eyes stood a strange man. And oh, what a wretched sight he was, wild-looking, dirty and uncombed,—poor Odysseus! Their screams had aroused him from his long slumber in the thicket. Stiff and bruised as he was, he dragged himself out, in eager haste to see a human face.

Nausicaa, brave little woman, was the only one who did not run away. She stood her ground with princess dignity, while her all maids peeped out from behind the

trees, expecting to see their mistress carried off.

But Odysseus perceived at once how womanly and good she was, and so he told her of his latest misfortune. The princess called her maids and bade them give him clothing. They took him to a sheltered place to bathe, and left him clean garments to put on. Perhaps a stranger's kindness never was so welcome as this of the young princess to Odysseus.

When he had bathed and dressed himself, he walked back along the shore. Nausicaa, as she saw him coming, said to her maidens:

"How changed he is! I thought at first that he was ill-looking, but now he is as beautiful as one of the gods. Go quickly, give him food and drink." And while Odysseus ate like the famished man that he was, she folded the clean clothes, put them away in the wagon, and harnessed the mules. Then she said to him:

THE MEETING OF ODYSSEUS AND NAUSICAA.

"Stranger, you may follow as we go back to town, and we will put you on the road that leads to my father's house. When you have found it, and have entered there, go not to the king, but to my mother, where she sits beside the hearth. Stretch out your hands to her. For if she favors you, then you may hope to see your home again."

And with a warning to him to keep behind them at a little distance, Nausciaa and her companions started homeward, all the merrier for having shown kindness to the poor shipwrecked sailor.

XVII. At the Palace of the Phaeacian King.

Odysseus followed at a short distance, until they passed a stately grove of poplar trees, and the mules and the cart and the laughing girls all vanished around a turning in the road. Odysseus paused and looked about him. Here, Nausicaa had told him, was her father's park. It extended as far from the town as a man's shout could be heard. He sat down beneath the trees and breathed a prayer to Athene, for whom the grove was named, that the Phaecians might treat him well.

When the young princess had had time to reach the palace, as he thought, he arose and walked along the road toward the town. And as he went, he met a young girl carrying a water jar. He asked of her the way to the king's house. She answered that he might follow her, but in silence,

and that he must not cast a glance at anyone, for the Phaeacians hated strangers.

As they went by, Odysseus admired the good harbor, the trim ships, and the long and well-built walls of the town. He kept silent, as the maid had said, and it seemed that Athene had thrown a mist about him to protect him, for no one saw him pass.

At the king's gate he paused again and gazed around. The west wind blew into his face. It was sweet with the breath of apple blossoms. On the other side of the hedge grew thrifty fig-trees, olives, pears, and pomegranates. Some were in bloom, others hung with ripening fruit. To the left, in the mellow sunset light, the gently sloping vineyards stretched away, with their rows upon rows of trellised vines. In a warm, level place the raisin grapes lay drying. In another place workmen were treading out the juices from fresh grapes for wine. Still other men were bringing in

their baskets filled with purple fruit. For in this country one could gather it the whole year long.

There were gardens, too, about the palace, and they were gay with many kinds of flowers. Two fountains flowing in the gardens gave water for the town and for the palace.

With a sigh of pleasure, Odysseus went on toward the house of the king. But he paused yet again before he entered, for the light within it was like sunshine or moonlight. The walls were all of bronze, the doors of gold with golden handles. The door posts were of silver. At each side golden and silver dogs were standing guard. Against the walls were placed long seats and these were spread with light, fine-spun rugs, the work of women. For the Phaeacian women were as skillful at weaving as the men were at building and sailing ships. The king had always fifty serving maids who wove and spun, and also

ground the yellow corn into meal for bread. The hall was lighted by torches in the hands of golden statues of young men.

The king and queen and all the household sat around the hearthstone. They were pouring wine out of their cups to Hermes, as they always did before they went to bed. Nausicaa and her maids were there. They had not spoken of having met the stranger. But the firelight rose and fell and flared again, and lo, there he was, kneeling before the queen. It was as if Athene had wrapped him in a cloud, for no one saw him enter. They gazed at him in dumb astonishment.

"Good queen," said Odysseus, throwing his arms about her knees, "May the gods prosper you and yours! I came here friendless and alone. All that I had is lost. Help me to reach my home!"

But the queen sat silent, looking at him keenly. She was wondering how the man had come by the clothes he wore, for they

were made in the pattern of her own looms. Odysseus arose and walked away, and seated himself in the ashes on the hearth, like any common beggar. The hall was still until an old man spoke,—the oldest of them all.

"O king," he said, "Is this an honorable way to treat a stranger? Come, bid this man arise, and sit beside you. And let him be treated like a friend."

Now when the old man had spoken, the king himself took Odysseus by the hand and raised him from the hearth.

"Page, mix a bowl of wine," he said, "and let us all pour a libation to Father Zeus, protector of the friendless."

It was clear that the stranger was to be made welcome. A dark-eyed maid hurried to bring the silver basin for washing the hands, and spread the polished table by his side. And the king's son, sitting at the king's right hand because he was best loved, arose at his father's wish and gave

Odysseus his seat. The house-keeper set food before him, and the page mixed water with the sweet wine, and poured some in his cup. They all poured out a little on the hearth, as an offering to Zeus, protector of the friendless. Then they all drank as much as each one wished, and those who did not live in the palace went to their own homes, for it was late.

But all this time the queen sat wondering. At last,

"Stranger, who are you?" she demanded. "Did you not say that you came to us out of the sea? Then let me ask you where you found your garments."

"The story is a long one," answered Odysseus.

"Tell it," the queen commanded.

He began with the story of the raft and the shipwreck, and told how he had been cast ashore. He said,

"I slept all night, and the next day. As the sun was going down, I was awak-

ened by the voices of your daughter and her maids as they played ball upon the shore. I arose and watched them. The princess was so beautiful, I said to myself, surely she must be a goddess. And well she might have been, for she gave me not only food and this clothing which you see but far better, hope and rest and friends."

Nausicaa, sitting in the shadow by the wall, blushed rosy red at his words, like the modest little princess that she was.

But it was bedtime. The queen told her maids to set a bed for the stranger in the covered porch, to lay purple rugs upon it, spread blankets over these, and woollen mantles on the outside for a covering. The maids took torches in their hands and left the hall. After they had made a comfortable bed, they came and standing by Odysseus, said,

"Stranger, your bed is ready."

So they all went to bed, the king and

his family and maid servants in the palace, the men servants and the stranger in the covered porch.

XVIII. Odysseus Among the Phaeacians.

The next day the king prepared a great feast in honor of his guest. In those days a traveler was well treated everywhere, for he must be a brave man who willingly exposed himself to the dangers of a long journey.

Early in the morning, while the servants were busy roasting oxen, sheep, and fat hogs for the feast, the king and Odysseus went down by the seashore, to the assembly place of the Phaeacians. There they took seats on polished stones set side by side. And the people came there, as eagerly as if the gods had called them, for they had heard that a stranger was in the town.

"Listen, my people," said the king. This stranger—I do not know his name—wishes us to take him home. And we must do so, as we have always done for travelers

who came this way. We must launch a new black ship, with fifty-two young men to do the rowing. I will supply you with provisions. Go now, some of you, and make the ship ready. The rest, come to my house and we will entertain our guest with feasting and with song."

They did as the king said. Some of the young men went to the shore and launched the ship and made it ready, and the others followed Odysseus and the king back to palace. There they found many more of the Phaeacians who had gathered in the halls and porches. They were eager to see and hear about the newcomer, who seemed to have been cast up out of the sea.

The tables fairly groaned with good things,—roasts of beef and mutton, chines of pork, bread in heaping baskets, and bowls of yellow honey and sweet wine. The page led in Demodocus, the blind musician, and placed a silver-studded chair for him against a pillar. His lyre the page

hung on a peg above his head, and showed him how to reach it with his hands. A table was set near him, and a tray with a cup of wine. The people seated themselves and made a merry feast.

When they had finished, Demodocus took the lyre from its peg above him as he sat, and sang a song about the Trojan war. He sang of a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles at a high feast. That day, so sang the bard, the tide of troubles began to overwhelm both Greek and Trojan armies. As he listened, and the memories of those old days came back to him, Odysseus caught up a corner of his purple cloak and threw it across his face. He did not wish the people to see him weep. But the king noticed, for he sat near and heard the sound of sobbing. When the song ended, Odysseus dried his tears, took up his cup and poured out offerings to the gods. And the king said,

"Now let us go out into the open fields

and have the sports. The stranger must tell his friends when he goes home that we excel the whole world in athletic games." He led the way, and a great crowd followed him. They went again to the assembly place which was beside the ships. Odysseus and the king sat down upon the two white stones. The people gathered around them and waited for the contests to begin. On the track stood three young athletes, the king's sons, ready and eager for a foot race. The distance was measured from a starting line; they bent with out-stretched arms; and away they dashed together. Little whiffs of dust rose after them. Faster and faster the twinkling feet sped on. The crowd cheered madly. First one, then another, was ahead; at last Clytoneus with a mighty effort shot past them all, and reaching the goal first, won the race by a plow's length.

The wrestling match came next; then boxing, leaping, and throwing the discus.

Every man did his best to please the king and the handsome stranger. During the last event, Laodamas said to his brother,

"Let us ask the stranger to try the games. He must be strong,—look at his thighs and the muscles of his neck, and his broad chest."

"Good," said his brother, "Let us challenge him."

Laodamas approached and said,

"Good stranger, now do you show us what you can do. For surely the greatest glory a man wins in life is that he earns with his own feet and hands."

"Ah, Laodamas," replied Odysseus, "do not challenge me, for I am sad at heart. Even now, as I sat here, I was thinking of my far-off home."

"Ay, to be sure," spoke young Euryalus mockingly, "the stranger does not appear to be an athlete. He is more like a trader, or a miser, who cares for nothing but his

gold." The eyes of Odysseus flashed with anger.

"Young man, your ill-mannered speech provokes me," he said quickly. "I am worn with toil and trouble, it is true. But I will try the games." He sprang to his feet, with his cloak still on, and seized a discus. It was larger and heavier than those which the young men had thrown. Poising himself, with a swift whirl he sent it humming from his hand. It flew far and away beyond the others. The people leaned over one another's shoulders, breathlessly watching until it struck the ground. Someone from the crowd ran out and marked the spot. "Ho!" he cried, "a blind man could pick out this one, it is so far beyond the rest."

Encouraged by the friendly voice, Odysseus threw off his cloak and stood with folded arms.

"I challenge all of you," he said, "for I can send another twice as far. And what

is more, though I am old, and I fear my joints are stiff, yet if any man will wrestle or box or run with me, let him come on. I am ready." He looked around. The field was his.

"Stranger," said the king courteously, "The right is surely yours to challenge anyone. No man denies your skill. But our young men are not at their best in boxing or the wrestling match. Laodamas, show us some dancing. Perhaps the stranger will confess that we have graceful dancers."

Laodamas and another youth stepped out of the crowd. One of them carried a soft purple ball. They stopped, glanced at each other, and began, throwing the ball from hand to hand, slowly at first, with rhythmic steps backward and forward; then gradually faster and faster, bending, twisting, and leaping with marvelous skill. Their comrades gathered about them and beat time with their hands and feet. The

purple ball seemed always in the air. Odysseus turned to the king:

"Ah, that is wonderful," he said. "Thy dancers do indeed excel all others."

The young men standing near were pleased to hear the stranger's praise. His words went quickly through the crowd.

"Come," said the king, "let each of our twelve princes give this guest the stranger's gift. For he seems to be a man of understanding. And let Euryalus give something too, for he was rude."

Euryalus unbound his sword. It was a costly one, with silver hilt and sheath of ivory. He went to the stranger and laid it in his hands.

"If I spoke harshly," said the young man, "let the winds sweep all such words away. And the gods grant that you may reach your home and see your wife again." Odysseus took the generous gift, saying,

"May the gods give you good fortune, dear young friend, and may you never miss

this sword." And he hung it about his shoulder.

The princes sent their servants to bring gifts from their rich houses for Odysseus, as the king had proposed. They took these gifts to the palace and set them down before the queen. And she arranged them in a beautiful chest which she had brought from the king's treasure chamber, together with a robe and tunic from her looms. The king himself gave a golden cup, so that Odysseus might remember him all the days of his life, whenever he poured out a drink-offering to the gods. Odysseus fastened a cord around the chest of treasures, and tied it in a cunning knot which he had learned from Circe.

That night after the evening meal was done, Demodocus the blind musician, beloved by everyone, took down his lyre again and sang to them stories of the war,—of the building of the wooden horse, and how the Trojans unwittingly brought ruin

upon themselves by dragging it within the walls. "For Odysseus and his men burst forth," sang Demodocus, "They burst forth from within the horse, and braved the fight. Odysseus won the day, Odysseus the wily and the brave."

Again Odysseus drew his purple robe about his head and wept. Ashamed to let the Phaeacians see his tears, he secretly wiped them away. But they had not escaped the keen eye of the king, who said, as the song ended,

"Now let us have no more of song to-night, for there is one of us who is not happy as he listens. The stranger has some secret sorrow surely, since music brings tears to his eyes." Then, turning to Odysseus, he said, "Stranger, your escort and your gifts are ready. Do not longer hide your name from us. Tell us why you weep when the bard sings the tales of Trojan heroes."

They gathered around the fire then,

and Odysseus at last told them his name, and his adventures. He began at the beginning, and told all the long, strange story, and their eyes grew bright with pleasure and wide with the wonder of it, as they listened to him.

XIX. Penelope's Weaving.

While Odysseus is telling his story to the friendly Phaeacians, let us find out what had been happening in this far-off island home during the twenty years of his absence.

It was night in Ithaca. Since it was clear to all that Odysseus must have been lost at sea, (else, why did he not come home?) a crowd of princes from Ithaca and many other lands had come to the palace of Odysseus, in the hope that Penelope would consent to marry one of them,—for it was widely known that Odysseus had great wealth. These suitors spent their days merry-making at the palace, eating and drinking much, and amusing themselves in various idle ways, while they waited for the queen to make up her mind. Now, however, they were gone away for the night.

From without, the palace of Odysseus seemed to be wrapped in darkness and in sleep. But there was one wakeful inmate. In one of the rooms set apart for the women, a solitary torch was burning. By its light a lady sat before a loom. Her face was pale and sad. Now and then she sighed deeply, and a tear stole down her cheek. She was not weaving. On the contrary, she was swiftly taking off threads from the loom, with fingers skilled by long practice.

Every night for three years she had arisen secretly at midnight and unravelled all that she had woven upon the loom the day before. And why? The princes had been pressing her to announce her choice of a husband. But she had put them off from day to day, saying "Wait, this cloth must first be finished; for Laertes, my husband's father, is old now and may die. And he must have a shroud." In truth, she did not wish to marry any of

them, yet she feared their anger if she refused them all.

To-night, as she worked by the flickering light of the torch, she thought as she had often thought before, "I know that Odysseus will return some day. I will not finish the cloth until he comes."

There was a sound of footsteps and the shutting of a door. The queen stopped with her hand upon the loom, and listened. All was still. She bent over her work again, but from time to time lifted her head with a glance toward the door of the room. There surely were sounds without. She arose. At that moment the heavy bolt shot back, the great door creaked upon its hinges, and the suitors with flaring torches in their hand rushed in.

"Ha!" they cried, "you are caught at last, for your maid has told us the secret. Come now, we will be cheated no longer."

But the queen drew her veil before her face.

"Princes," she said with dignity, "what means this intrusion? Are you princes, indeed, that you break into a queen's chamber at midnight like common thieves? Go. You should blush to have this told of you in Ithaca."

They looked at her in astonishment. One after another turned and left the room. But Antinous, the boldest, nodded his head over his shoulder as he went, saying, "You will finish the shroud to-morrow."

Penelope shut the door after them and turned the key. She looked at her work upon the loom. Her eyes filled with tears. "Odysseus, Odysseus," she sighed, "When will you come back to me?"

XX. The Young Prince and His Guest.

In the courtyard around the great doorway of the palace of Odysseus the princes sat on rugs made of the hides of Odysseus' cattle which they had killed for food. Servants were busy in the hall near by, some mixing wine and water in bowls, some washing the tables with sponges and setting them for the next meal, while others carved great quantities of meat. The suitors were jesting and laughing among themselves, and playing games to pass away the time. These men were tall and strong and richly clad, —the foremost men of Ithaca and the neighboring isles. But they behaved as if they owned the palace; so at least young Telemachus thought, to judge by his look, which plainly said he did not love them. Although the son of Odysseus

and master of his house and lands, he sat among the suitors sad at heart and lonely. He was thinking of his father, wishing that he might come home, scatter the suitors, and be master of his own.

As he glanced out through the gateway, he saw a stranger approaching with shield and spear. He arose quickly and went to greet him, ashamed that any stranger should stand before the gate with no one to ask him in.

"Noble stranger," said he, "enter and welcome." He grasped the stranger's hand, and taking his brazen spear, led him through the courtyard and past the idle princes, who looked up from their game of draughts to gaze curiously at the visitor.

The two entered the roomy hall. The young prince put the stranger's spear into a well worn rack where some of his father's spears still stood. Then he set chairs for himself and his guest somewhat

apart from those in which the princes would sit when they came in to dinner. For he thought the stranger would not enjoy his meal in the midst of their boisterous din. Then, too, he wished to ask his guest about Odysseus—whether by any chance the two had met at Troy or since the war was over.

A servant brought a silver basin for their hands; others brought heaping baskets of meat and bread, and bowls of honey, and set their golden goblets ready. A page came and poured wine into the goblets.

The merry princes soon trooped in, flung themselves into seats and fell to eating. When some of them had done, they called for music. A musician played the harp and sang to them. In the midst of all this noise, Telemachus bent close to the visitor:

"You see these men, good stranger," he said. "They seem to care for nothing

but music, eating and drinking and playing games. They are here without my asking; and they are using up good food and wine. If they should see my father coming, they would want swift feet to escape him. But he is gone, and there is no comfort left us, for he will not return. But now," he continued, putting aside his own affairs, "tell me your name. On what ship did you come? For I am sure you did not come on foot. And is this the first time you have been in Ithaca? And did you know my father?"

"I am Mentor, chief of the Taphians, who love the sea," answered the clear-eyed stranger. "I put in here on the way to Temese to get bronze. My ship now carries iron. There it lies," and he pointed out beyond the wide doorway, to the black-hulled ship at anchor in the bay. "I came here because I thought Odysseus would be here," continued Mentor. "All the other warriors have re-

turned long since, save those that perished by the walls of Troy. The gods must be detaining him, but surely he will not delay much longer. If he were bound with chains, he would find some way to slip them, for he is wonderfully cunning. But tell me now, are you really his son? For you are very like him." Telemachus answered:

"Yes, I am the son of that ill-fated man."

"Then surely the house of Odysseus is blessed in having such a son," said Mentor. "But now, who are these men? Is this a wedding, or a drinking bout? These heedless fellows, feasting here—a man of sense must be annoyed by them."

"These are the chiefs who rule the islands near us," said Telemachus. "Some of them, too, are great men here in Ithaca. They say that my mother must marry one of them, and that they will not go from here until she chooses

one. She dares do nothing against them. And before long they will have wasted everything we have."

"Indeed," said Mentor, "you do need Odysseus here to deal with them. I wish he might come now, within that gate, armed with his helmet, shield, and spears, as I once saw him in my own home, where he came seeking a poison to dip his arrows in. These men would get a bitter wedding feast from him! The gods alone know whether he will come. However, you must plan to drive the suitors away. Come, call a meeting of the council. Tell the chiefs of Ithaca your wishes, and there, in the name of the gods, command the suitors to go back to their own homes. Then prepare the best ship that you have, find twenty oarsmen, and go and seek tidings of Odysseus. Go to Pylos and question old King Nestor, or better, go to Lacedaemon to King Menelaus, for he came home last from Troy. If you can

find out that your father is alive, then, hard as it is, you may endure for one year more. But if you find that he is dead, come back at once and build his funeral pyre. The lady Penelope may then wed again, and you may plan to slay these suitors as you will." He looked at the crowd of princes, some of whom had fallen asleep upon the floor, while others rattled the dice-box, loudly quarreling between the throws.

"Now I must go," he said, "My crew are waiting for me." Placing his hands on the lad's shoulders and looking into his eyes, "My boy," said he, "you who are fair and tall, be also strong, that men in future may speak well of you. Heed what I say. Rely upon yourself."

Telemachus spoke words of thanks, urged him to stay, and mentioned gifts. But Mentor said, "Do not detain me now, for I must go. If you would give me something, give it when I come again,

and let it be as beautiful as you will, for what I shall give you is even better and more beautiful."

Once more he turned his large clear eyes upon the young prince, and then went his way, like an eagle in its flight. Telemachus was filled with new courage and with awe, for he knew that Athene herself, the wise goddess, who gave courage, had been near at hand.

XXI. Telemachus at the Council.

Early the next morning Telemachus came from his chamber, clad in his scarlet mantle and with his sharp sword slung across his shoulder. Said he to the clear-voiced heralds, "Go quickly, and call the council meeting." The heralds hurried through the town, calling to each warrior, "O chief, you are summoned to the council."

The long-haired chieftains gathered very quickly. The young prince waited with impatience until all had come. Then with his brazen spear in hand and his two dogs following, he went out to the council, bearing himself so nobly that all the people gazed at him. The older men made way for him to sit in his father's place.

An aged chieftain was the first to speak. His son, Odysseus had taken with

him to the war. Nevertheless the old man loved his absent king and mourned for him. Tears were in his eyes when he arose and said:

"Men of Ithaca, this is the first assembly we have held since our king Odysseus sailed away. Who calls us now? Has some man heard of the coming of an army, or is there some other public matter to discuss? May Zeus help him who calls us in his need."

Telemachus, who burned to speak, could be silent no longer. He arose, and taking his father's scepter from a herald who stood near, he said:

"Chiefs, I have called you here, not to speak of public matters, nor to tell you of the coming of an army, but because I am in trouble. Even the loss of the king my father could not be worse than this misfortune which has come upon me. My mother is beset by suitors, who have taken possession of the

house of Odysseus. Some of these suitors are your sons, you who are leaders here. They declare that they will not leave until my mother marries one of them. They will not go to her father's house with gifts, so that he may choose a husband for her as he pleases. No; they swarm here, killing our fat cattle for their feasts, and drinking our good wine, and wasting everything. I dare not deny them, for they are a hundred, and I am alone, it seems, without a single friend. I am ashamed to see my house being plundered so. And you should be ashamed, my neighbors, not to help us. And you should fear the anger of the gods. It would be better if you yourselves were robbing us, for some day we might make you pay for it. But now—Oh, if I only had the strength! I cannot bear it any longer." And the boy—for he was only a boy after all—dashed his scepter to the ground and burst into despairing tears.

There was a moment of silence, while they pitied him. Then Antinous, the boldest of the suitors, burst forth:

"Hot-tempered boy, what do you mean by putting us to shame? The blame does not belong to us, but to Penelope herself. For three years now she has been mocking us with promises which she has never meant to keep. Send her back to her own father's house if you would have us go, for we will never leave her until we know that she will marry one of us."

Then said the boy with flashing eyes:

"Indeed, I will not send my mother away. Stay on, if ye be bold enough. I will call upon the gods to help me, and you shall be ruined forever." Even as he spoke, there was a rush of wings, and two great eagles suddenly wheeled about over the heads of the astonished company, looking down upon them with their fierce, bright eyes. It seemed as if the gods had promised an answer to the prayer of Tel-

emachus. Then savagely tearing at each other with their claws, the eagles soared away again toward the right, over the houses of the town.

In the assembly an old man arose who understood the flight of birds.

"Listen to me, men of Ithaca," he said: "This means that Odysseus even now is coming home. Woe is in store for the suitors and for many more of us." But one of the suitors said:

"Well, well, old man, go home and play the prophet to your children, and so keep them out of mischief. Plenty of birds are flying in the sunshine. They are not all sent by the gods. As for Odysseus, he is dead; and I should be glad if you were too, old croaker. Are you trying to please Telemachus, so that he may give you something?" And turning to Telemachus, he continued, "Take my advice; let Penelope go back again to her own father's house. There she

can have the wedding and arrange about the gifts. We suitors will not leave her until then, for we are not afraid of any man, nor any evil prophecies." But Telemachus said:

"I will talk no longer. Give me a ship and twenty men to row, and I will go and look for tidings of my father. If I find that he is dead, I will come back and build his funeral pyre, and give my mother to another husband." One of the chiefs said scornfully:

"The lad might make the journey, but I rather think he will get all his news in Ithaca." And after some more aimless talk, the council broke up, and the chiefs went home.

XXII. Telemachus Takes Leave.

Telemachus walked alone by the sea-shore. Kneeling, he bathed his hands in the cool water. The council meeting had left him bitterly disappointed, and in his heart he prayed to Athene that he might find a way out of his trouble. He turned at last toward home, when lo, there beside him stood the friend of yesterday, noble and strong. Telemachus took heart again.

"My lad," said Mentor, "your father's son must never fail in courage. Make ready for the voyage, and I will find you ship and crew, for there must be many a brave man in Ithaca willing to do your bidding." The boy's heart leaped at the words. His prayer was answered. He hastened to the palace, where he found the suitors in the courtyard flaying goats and singeing swine for their next meal. At the door he met Antinous, who laugh-

ingly took him by the hand and told him to be angry no longer, but to eat and drink, for the Ithacans would let him go to sea if he had set his heart upon it. The young prince answered gravely:

"Antinous, I cannot be merry among robbers; but I shall go to Pylos." Then quietly withdrawing his hand, he turned away. At supper the suitors mocked him, saying:

"Do you suppose Telemachus is plotting to destroy us? And how will he do it, by bringing warriors home from Pylos, or by putting poison in our wine?" One said jeeringly, "No doubt he will be lost, just as his father was," and added that that would be all the better, since then the man that Penelope should marry would have the house and lands.

But Telemachus knew that he had one faithful friend in the palace. He went through the house to his father's storeroom, where he found his good old nurse,

Eurycleia. This room held the most precious things—the stores of fragrant oil, the treasures of gold and bronze, and the clothing laid away in chests. Great jars of old, sweet wine stood there along the wall. The folding doors of this room were always shut, and the old nurse guarded the treasures day and night.

"Eurycleia," said Telemachus, "Fill me twelve jars of wine and fit them with tight covers. And pour me twenty well-sewn bags full of ground barley meal. Tell no one but get all the things together, and when my mother has gone to her room to bed, then I will come for them. For I am going away, to look for tidings of Odysseus." But the good nurse held up her hands and cried:

"Oh, my dear child, how came you to have such notions? Where in the wide world will you go? No, stay at home, my boy."

"Have no fear," answered Telemachus,

"the gods are helping me in this. But hide it from my mother until she asks for me. She must not stain her beautiful face with tears." The nurse gave him her promise, and went away to do as she was told, though with an anxious heart.

The night had come, and all the suitors had gone early to their homes, sleepy with wine. From beyond the courtyard, the voice of Mentor called Telemachus. It was time to go.

At the beach they found the ship and the sailors ready. Some of these helped them carry out the jars of wine and sacks of barley meal, and stow them on board ship. Mentor and Telemachus took places at the stern. The oarsmen loosened the ropes and sat down on the benches. A fair wind sang along the purple sea. They raised the mast, set it in the socket, bound it fast with forestays, and ran up the flapping sail. It filled and strained. The water hissed before the bow as the boat started.

The sailors poured a bowl of wine out to Athene, who was guarding them; and so they were off, through the darkness, and over the sounding sea.

XXIII. Telemachus Visits Nestor.

At sunrise the next morning they sailed into the blue bay of Pylos. Hundreds of people were gathered on the beach, making an early morning sacrifice to Poseidon, god of the sea.

The pilot brought the ship close in. The sailors moored her, furled the sail, and came ashore.

"No shyness now, Telemachus," said Mentor, "You must go straight to Nestor, and find out all that he knows about Odysseus." Telemachus said,

"But it is fitting for a young man to be shy when he is questioning his elders. What shall I say to him?"

"The gods are helping you," answered Mentor, "You will find words." They approached the place where Nestor sat among his sons. Around him men were busy roasting meat and making ready

for the feast which always followed the sacrifice. When they saw the strangers, these men gathered about them, and grasped their hands in welcome. A son of Nestor laid soft fleeces down upon the sand beside the seat of the king, for the guests to sit upon. And he offered them a cup of wine, saying to Mentor,

"Stranger, make an offering to Poseidon, for this is his feast. And after you, let your friend do so, for all men have need of the gods. As you are the elder, I offer this to you first." He placed the cup in Mentor's hand. And Mentor, pleased to find the man so courteous, took the cup and said this prayer:

"O Poseidon, bring prosperity to Nestor and his sons, for their great sacrifice, and grant that Telemachus and I may accomplish that which we have come for." He poured out

some of the wine upon the sand, and passed the cup to Telemachus, who said the same words, pouring out more wine. Then they sat down and held a glorious feast. After it was over, Nestor said,

"Now it is fitting to ask our guests about themselves. Strangers, who are you, whence come you, and what is your errand here?" Telemachus took courage and replied:

"We are from Ithaca, and our quest concerns ourselves alone. I am seeking tidings of my father, hardy Odysseus, who fought side by side with you at Troy. We know of all the other leaders of the Greeks, how each one died, who died, and where all those are who came home. But no man can tell us of Odysseus, whether he lost his life on land or sea, or whether he still lives. Therefore I come here to your knees to

ask you what you know about him. I do entreat you, tell me all the truth."

"Ah, friend," said the aged king, "You bring to mind all that we suffered during those years at Troy. There Ajax died, and there Achilles, and my own brave son, and many others. Who can count them? It would take years to tell of everything that happened. And through it all your father and I fought and made plans together. We never disagreed. He was the leader of us all in wisdom and in cunning."

"And so you are his son! I am amazed to see you and hear you talk. One does not expect a lad to speak so fittingly."

"After the city fell," he continued, "Our leaders quarreled. Menelaus wanted all the Greeks to turn toward home, but Agamemnon wanted them to stay

and offer sacrifices to Athene that she might grant them a safe journey. And so the army was divided. Half stayed with Agamemnon, but we came home with Menelaus and the others. Odysseus came with us at first, but changed his purpose and went back to Agamemnon. He must have been among the last to leave. I was among the first, so I can tell you nothing of him. But he may return even yet, for the gods favor him. All through the war, Athene constantly stood by him. I hope that she may do as much for you."

"It is too much to hope," Telemachus answered sadly, "As for Odysseus, I have little doubt that he has long been dead."

"Menelaus may know more of him, for he went a longer way, so that he is only lately home. Go at once with your ship and crew, and question him; or better still, travel by land. I can lend you a chariot and horses, and my sons will

be your guides to Lacedæmon. Beg him to tell you all the truth, for he will do it."

Since the feast was over, Telemachus and Mentor would have gone back to the ship, but Nestor said,

"The son of Odysseus shall not sleep on a ship's deck while I or my children live to entertain him. We have plenty of good robes and rugs to make you comfortable."

"Telemachus shall stay," said Mentor, "and he will go to Lacedæmon with your son. But I must go back to the ship and cheer my men. They need a man of years among them. In the morning I will go about my business." Then turning his large clear eyes upon them in farewell, he went away swiftly, like an eagle in its flight. And when they caught that marvelous clear glance, and saw his way of going, wonder fell upon them. The aged Nestor grasped Telemachus by the hand and said,

"Surely the gods are with you, although you are so young. You will not fail, for Athene is your guardian." They said good-night. Telemachus went to his bed in the echoing portico, and one of Nestor's sons slept near him.

In the morning Nestor sat upon the smooth white stones that stood before the gate, giving his orders for the day. He was preparing a sacrifice to Athene. His six sons, as they came out one by one from their sleeping rooms, gathered about him, and Telemachus came with them. The king sent one of his sons to bring in a heifer from the fields, another to bring the goldsmith who would tip the heifer's horns with gold, and a third to the ship to bring the crew, that they might join in the feast. The wife and daughter of Nestor also came. The king began the sacrifice by the washing of hands and the sprinkling of barley meal upon the ground. He said a prayer to Athene,

and cast the heifer's forelocks in the fire. One of the sons then killed the heifer with an axe, and another caught the fresh blood in a bowl, for it was to be offered to the goddess. Then some of the meat was burned in sacrifice, and the king poured sparkling wine upon it. Slicing the rest, they roasted it on forks, which they held in their hands as they stood before the fire.

Meanwhile one of the servants gave Telemachus a bath, and anointed him with oil. She also gave him a fresh tunic, and a robe to put on over it. After this he came out and sat by Nestor, and they all ate the roasted meat.

When the feast was over, Nestor told his sons to get the chariot ready for the journey. Quickly they harnessed the horses to the car. The housekeeper put in good things for them to eat. Telemachus mounted the chariot with Peisistratus, the son of Nestor, who was to be the

driver. With a crack of the whip they started down from the steep hill of Pylos into the level plain. And all day long the horses shook the yoke between them as they went. That night they halted at a place upon the way, where a friend gave them lodging. In the morning they went on again, past fields of waving grain, toward Lacedaemon, lying low among the hills.

XXIV. The Evil Plan of The Suitors.

Telemachus had been gone from home a week or more. The suitors passed the time as merrily as ever. One morning they were gathered in the courtyard, trying to see which one could throw a discus or a hunting spear the farthest. At this sport Antinous and Eurymachus took turns in winning. As the former sat down after a lucky throw, a man drew near and spoke to him.

"Antinous, do you know when Telemachus will be coming back from Pylos? He took my ship to go, and now I myself am in need of it for a trip across to Elis, where I keep my horses. I am planning to bring home a colt to break." The others stopped their sport, amazed. They had not known that he had gone to Pylos. They had imagined him still about

the farm, among the flocks, or with the swineherd.

"Did he take your vessel secretly," Antinous asked the man, "or did you let him have it?"

"I willingly gave it to him for the trip," was the answer, "What else could I do? He was in trouble."

"Who went with him?" asked Antinous.

"Next to ourselves, the best men in the land, and Mentor went as captain, or a god exactly like him. I wonder about that, for I saw Mentor here yesterday morning. How could it be?"

The suitors crowded near, curious to listen. The angry eyes of Antinous glowed like coals of fire.

"Well, well, this is a great happening!" he cried. "We said he should not go, and here in spite of us he launches a ship and takes the best men of the land. He is becoming dangerous. Give me a ship and twenty men, and I will lie in wait

for him as he comes back. He must be brought to grief for this." The others urged him on, and they went into the palace to complete their evil plan.

Penelope also did not know that the young prince had gone. But now Medon the page, who had been listening in the the courtyard, ran to tell her of it and of the suitors' plan. She was so frightened that she could not speak for a long time. Tears rushed to her eyes. At last she faintly said,

"Why did he go?"

"He went to find news of his father," answered the page. It may be that a god is sending him." But there was no comfort for Penelope. She sank upon the floor moaning in grief. And all her maids wept with her, as she cried:

"First my husband lost, and now my son. And he went secretly, and did not let me know. I would not have let him go if I had known. Now there is no one

left but old Laertes. Call Dolius the slave, and send him to Laertes. Ask the old man, feeble as he is, if he cannot in some way come before the people of the town and cry out against these suitors who are ruining our family." But the good nurse said to her:

"It is my fault that you were not told of this before. He made me promise not to tell you, so that you would not grieve for him. Now bathe, and dress you in fresh garments, and go into your upper chamber, and there make your prayer to Athene, daughter of Zeus, to keep him safe. Surely the family will not be ruined after all."

Her words comforted Penelope, and she did as the nurse had said. She bathed and put on fresh garments, and with her maids she went into the upper room carrying a basket of barley to scatter as she made her prayer.

Meantime Antinous and twenty men

with him went down to the shore to prepare a ship for their voyage. And after sunset they set sail for one of the island harbors, where they would watch for the vessel of Telemachus.

That night a dream came to Penlope.

A woman whom she knew stood by her in her dream, saying,

"Have no fear, Penelope, Athene herself is with your son. Seeing you grieve, Athene pitied you, and it is she who sent me here to tell you so." The woman vanished in the dream, and Penelope's heart was full of hope as she awoke.

XXV. Telemachus Visits Menelaus.

In the house of Menelaus, kinsmen and friends were making merry. The sound of music and of dancing feet greeted the ears of the two travelers as they drew rein before the gates. It was the wedding feast of the king's daughter, and also of his son.

Servants came out to meet them, and unyoking the sweating horses, drove them into the stables, tied and fed them, and set the chariot up against the wall. Other servants led the strangers into the high-roofed house and to the polished baths, where the maids attended them, and dressed them in soft garments for the feast. They entered the great, shining hall, and were given seats near the king's throne. A servant brought a golden pitcher of water for their hands and poured it out into a silver basin, and

spread a polished table beside them. The housekeeper offered them many kinds of food, and the carver placed before them platters of meat, and set their golden goblets ready. Then said light-haired Menelaus,

"Break bread, and have good cheer, and by-and-by when you have eaten we will ask you who you are. For you appear to be no less than princes." He took in his hands the piece of roast beef which had been chosen and placed before him as the finest piece, and set it before his guests.

As they were feasting, Telemachus whispered to his friend:

"Notice the blaze of bronze around the echoing hall, and the ornaments of amber, of silver, and of ivory. This must be like the halls of Zeus on Mt. Olympus. I am amazed to see such wealth." Menelaus heard them and replied:

"No, my young friends, no mortal house is like the halls of Zeus. And this may not be the richest house in the world. These

treasures I collected in my eight years' wandering after the war. But I could be happier without them, if only the dear friends were here who fell at Troy. I mourn for them all, but especially for Odysseus." Quick tears came to the eyes of Telemachus. He drew his purple cloak before his face. The king saw this, and was about to question him. But the wide door swung back, and Helen, the fairest woman in the world, the one for whom they had all fought so long on the windy plains of Troy, entered the hall. A maid hurried to set a chair and put a cushion on it, while another brought her silver work basket on rollers, and her distaff filled with yarn. She seated herself. Her eyes were fixed upon Telemachus. Turning to the king, she said,

"I am amazed; for no man ever looked so like another as this youth looks like Odysseus's son Telemachus."

"So I think," said Menelaus, "and he

is like Odysseus, too. And when I spoke the name of Odysseus, the boy's eyes filled with tears."

Telemachus could not speak, but the son of Nestor said,

"It is true, O king. He is Odysseus' son. But he is silent from bashfulness, before you and the lady Helen."

"Is he really here in my house?" cried Menelaus, "the son of my dear friend Odysseus, whom I would rather see returning than all the other chiefs beside, if only Zeus had willed it so!"

The ready tears fell from the eyes of all of them, and they talked of Odysseus late into the night, until at last Helen poured into their cups a draught that made them forget their sorrow.

"The gods have sent us many griefs," she said, "but let us banish them until the morning"

They listened while she told them a story of the war,—that Odysseus, dressed

in beggar's rags, entered Troy as a spy in the face of his enemies, how he found Helen, the only one who knew him, and having learned many things about the Trojans, went back in safety to his friends.

Then Telemachus spoke,

"O Menelaus, what can you tell me of him now? For I have come from Ithaca to ask this question of you."

"I will tell you what the Old Man of the Sea told me," answered the king. "We were becalmed for twenty days off Pharos. What to do we did not know. We might have been there even yet, had not a goddess rescued us.

" 'Why do you not consult the Old Man of the Sea?' she said, 'for he can help you. Come to the shore at dawn and I will show you how to capture him.'

"In the morning I took three trusted comrades and walked along the shore. We found her waiting for us. Before her were four freshly flayed seal skins, and

in the sand were scooped four hollows. She bade us lie down in the hollows, and fitted a sealskin over each of us. We lay there in the warm sun until midday. The real seals came and wallowed in the sand beside us, without fear. At noon out of the sea came the Old Man himself, to count his fat seals. He did not suspect a trick but finally lay down among them, like a shepherd with his flock. With a shout we sprang up and threw our arms about him. But the Old Man was crafty. He changed himself first into a bearded lion, then he became a fiery dragon, then a leopard, then a huge boar with gleaming tusks. He turned into water, then into a tree. But we held him fast, until, wizard as he was, we tired him out. He returned to his own shape and said, 'What is it ye would have?' I asked him many questions, and he told me of my warrior friends from Troy. Last of all he said, 'Odysseus lives, a captive on

Calypso's isle, with neither ship nor crew to bear him home.'

"The Old Man also told me how to come home to Lacedaemon. Then he broke away from us and plunged beneath the waves."

So ended the king's tale.

That night, while all the household slept, Telemachus lay broad awake. His heart beat high with hope as he thought of his father, still alive, but sank again when he remembered that Odysseus was a prisoner. His thoughts went back to his home and the wicked suitors. It seemed to him that Athene stood by him and said:

"Telemachus, it is not well for you to be so long away from home. Even now the suitors plan to cut off your return. Watch for them in the strait between Ithaca and Samos, and keep away from the island harbors." So, he thought, he might never see his dear mother again.

He had not even said farewell to her. It seemed as if the morning would never come. He tossed restlessly beneath the sheepskin coverlets. Suddenly he remembered the wonderful power of Mentor.

"Surely Nestor spoke the truth," he said to himself, "I cannot fail. Mentor is with me, and he is like the wise goddess herself." Thus consoled, he fell asleep.

When he awoke, the sun was shining high. He quickly arose, put on his tunic and his broad cloak over it, and went to meet the king.

"O Menelaus, leader of armies," he said, "let me go back, for my heart longs for home." Menelaus answered,

"I will not keep you if you wish to go, for I like to welcome the coming and speed the parting guest. But let me have the maids prepare a meal, for you must not go hungry." He gave orders to light the fire and roast the meat, and then he went with Helen to a fragrant treasure

chamber heaped with precious things. The king chose a double cup and a bowl of silver for his gifts, and Helen, lingering beside the chest full of embroidered robes that she herself had woven, drew forth one that sparkled like a star.

"This," she said, "I will give to the young prince for his bride." They laid the gifts before him with many friendly words.

The chariot and horses were waiting in the courtyard. The two young men had poured their libations to the gods and said farewell, when someone pointed out, high in air, an eagle carrying a white goose in his talons. Men and women ran shouting after, for the goose belonged to the farmyard. As the eagle drew near, he flew to the right before the horses. All the friends of Telemachus were glad, for they thought this a lucky sign for the journey.

The queen stood in the doorway.

"See," she said, "the eagle swooped down from his home in the hills and caught the farmyard goose. That is the way Odysseus will come home and take revenge."

"Zeus grant it," said Telemachus, with a high heart, "and thanks to you for saying so."

The horses started at the touch of the whip. And so they journeyed back to sandy Pylos, thence to the ships, and far across the sea toward Ithaca. But they kept away from those dangerous island harbors, where the dream of Telemachus had told him that the suitors lay in wait for him.

XXVI. Odysseus Leaves the Phaeacians.

When Odysseus had finished telling his story to the king's household, no sound was to be heard save the embers crackling on the hearth. The listeners were busy thinking, some of Polyphemus, the blinded giant, others of Calypso's wonderful island, and of Circe and the swine. The king was the first to speak:

"Odysseus, no more hardship shall be yours. We will see that you reach home in safety." All the listeners were pleased to hear him say it. "The chest of gifts is ready," he continued, "and to-morrow let each man here bring a tripod and a caldron in addition." Then, for it was late, the guests went home, and all the house was quiet for the night.

The next day the Phaeacian king had still another sacrifice and feast. But now

Odysseus was impatient to be gone. He kept glancing at the sun, as if he would hasten its setting, as a plowman does at supper time, after his long day's work. When at last the feast was over, he said, "O king, now pour a libation, and send me on my way, and may the gods grant you good fortune."

"You shall go," answered the king, "but first let us make a prayer to Zeus for your safe journey." They lifted their cups, filled with sweet wine, and as they poured, there was a prayer in each man's heart that the gods might guide Odysseus home. He placed his own cup in the queen's hand, saying,

"Farewell, good queen, I go my way. May the gods bring long life and happiness to you and yours." He turned and passed out through the wide doorway.

As he crossed the covered porch he saw, leaning against a pillar, a girlish figure.

"Farewell, Odysseus," said Nausicaa. "When you have reached your home, remember us."

"Princess," he answered, "I owe you my life and I shall be grateful to you so long as I shall live." It was thus that he left the house of Nausicaa's father.

Servants laden with his gifts had already gone down to the sea shore. The king followed them, and stowed the precious things safely away beneath the rowers' benches. Odysseus went on deck, and waving a farewell to his kind friends, he gave the order to set sail.

Swiftly and steadily ran the boat, as a strong-winged sea gull flies low over the water. Weary Odysseus, lulled by the murmuring of water at the prow, soon fell asleep. When the boat entered the harbor of Ithaca, they took him up, still sleeping, and laid him on the sandy shore of his own land. They placed the gifts of the Phaeacians beside him, safely cov-

THE SLEEPING ODYSSEUS IS LAID ON THE SHORE OF ITHACA BY THE PHAEACIANS.

ered with rugs. Then they sailed away and left him there.

As the Phaeacian ship returned to its own harbor, a strange fate befell it, for suddenly it was stopped within the bay, and turned into a towering rock. The people on the shore could not believe that this had happened, until the king said:

"Now the old prophecy has come to pass, that Poseidon would destroy a Phaeacian ship, and raise a towering rock before the city. For it is not pleasing to the great god of the sea that we should rescue shipwrecked sailors and take them to their homes." And of all shipwrecked sailors, Odysseus was the one most hated by the sea god, who was the father of the blinded Polyphemus. So the Phaeacians, in great fear, made sacrifices to Poseidon, and never dared to take another traveler home.

XXVII. The Disguise.

At length Odysseus awoke, stood up, and gazed around him. Where was he? At first he could not tell. The shore seemed strangely familiar, and that winding road over the hills, whither did it lead? Where had he seen those rocks, and trees, and sheltered coves? Had he been left on some deserted island? He struck his hands upon his thighs, and groaned. Why had the Phaeacians done this? They had promised to bring him home. He looked about him again; but a mist was over everything, and he could not see. He counted his treasures to be sure that he had them all. Then he walked anxiously along the shore.

What next? As if in answer to the question, a shepherd lad came strolling down the path. At least he seemed a shepherd, although his mantle was finely

woven and his face was delicate. Odysseus gladly went to meet him.

"Friend, what land is this?" he asked.

"You must have come a long way," said the shepherd, "if you have not heard of Ithaca. It is a rugged country, to be sure, and the roads are unfit for driving horses, yet after all it is not so very poor. We have good pastures for cattle on these hills. Good grain is growing in the valley yonder, and fruitful vineyards on the sunny slopes. They know of Ithaca as far away as Troy,—and that is a great distance, so they say. Have you come far?"

Odysseus rejoiced at these words, but he did not know whether the shepherd would prove to be a friend or a foe. So he invented a tale about himself:

"I killed an enemy in far off Crete, and then I fled to save my life,"—he stopped, for the shepherd was smiling. A wonderful change had come over him,

so that now Odysseus saw the shepherd lad no longer, but a queenly woman, fair and tall. She patted him gently with her hand.

"You are a very wily man, Odysseus," she said, "but you cannot deceive the gods. I have been near you always, guarding you in your toil and your adventures, and yet you did not know me."

"It is hard for a man to know you, goddess of wisdom," he said, "for you take many forms. Since we left Troy I never once have seen you, or known you to be near my ship. But it was you, I think, who led me into the town of the Phaeacians. Now by my father's name, tell me the truth, is this land Ithaca? I dare not think it is."

"I will show you all the landmarks," said Athene. "Here is the harbor, here the olive tree at the head of it, and here the cave of the naiads, as it always was.

This woody hill is Neriton." As she spoke, she cleared away the mist from before his eyes. And then he saw that this was really home. There by the road-side stood the old olive tree. The road itself led to his own door. Breathing a prayer of thankfulness, he threw himself down and kissed the earth for joy.

But now, his gifts. Athene showed him a place for them, in the shadowy cave, near the olive tree. Together they hid the treasures safely in its dark recesses, and in the entrance placed a stone. Then they sat down together under the olive tree, and she told him everything about his home and about the suitors, so that he might plan a safe return and yet take vengeance on them. Odysseus said to her,

"I should have been put to death in my own home, like Agamemnon, if you had not told me this. But if you will stand by and give me courage, I can

face three hundred men." Athene promised this, and told him also not to go at once to the palace, but first to visit the hut of Eumaeus the swineherd, for he would be a loyal friend.

Then she touched him gently with her wand, and in a moment he became a a shriveled and gray-haired old man. His clothes turned to rough deerskin, tattered and smoke-begrimed. In his hand was a staff; a miserable wallet full of holes hung on a cord around his neck. You would have thought him only a common beggar,—not in the least a king.

XXVIII. The Beggar and the Swineherd.

Odysseus climbed the rocky pathway from the harbor, and went along the road over the hills and through the wooded country until he came to his own farm.

Eumaeus, the aged swineherd, sat by the door of his hut, making himself a pair of sandals out of well-tanned hide. As he worked, he heard the contented grunting of his hogs in the sties near by. Eumaeus had built these sties with his own hands, after his master Odysseus had gone off to the war. Twelve pens surrounded an open yard, fenced by a high, strong wall, with thorn brush on the top of it. Every well-laid stone showed forth the swineherd's faithfulness.

Four watchdogs lay dozing at their master's feet. Suddenly they sprang up and rushed out barking savagely. An old

beggar, staff in hand, was coming slowly down the road. The dogs threatened to tear him to pieces, but he wisely let go his staff, and sat down calmly by the roadside. Even then, he would have been in danger of his life, there at his own gate, had not Eumaeus dropped his work and rushed out, and shouted at the dogs, driving them off with a shower of stones.

"Those dogs would have brought shame on me by killing you," he said to the beggar, "as if I had not trouble enough already. For I sit here and tend fat hogs for strangers to eat, while my dear master, the best that ever was, is wandering somewhere in foreign lands, hungry perhaps, if indeed he is alive. Ah, well,—come in, old man, have something to eat, and tell me what your own troubles are." The beggar followed him into the hut. The swineherd made a seat for him upon the bed, which was only a pile of brushwood, covered with calf skins.

"May the gods bless you for treating me so kindly," said the beggar as he sat down.

"Far be it from me to turn anyone away from my door," answered the honest swineherd, "Father Zeus protects the stranger, and I am serving him when I serve you. My good master would have rewarded me for it, but he is gone. I only wish all Helen's tribe had perished too!" So saying, he buckled on his belt and knife and went out to the sties. In a short time he came in again with two small pigs, which he had killed and dressed. He began to roast them over the fire, talking as he worked.

"I am offering you what servants have, these puny little pigs. The fat ones go to the palace every day. The queen's suitors, if you please, will have none but the best. My master's means were vast, with all his flocks and herds, his droves of goats and swine, but no amount of

wealth can stand such wasting." He placed the food before the beggar, who ate hungrily. Eumaeus filled his own cup with wine to the brim, and gave it to his guest. The beggar gladly drank, and then he said,

"Tell me about your master. You say he is away. Perhaps I may be able to give you news of him, for I have traveled in many lands."

"Old man, you could not get his wife and son to trust your story," said the swineherd, sitting down to work on his sandals again. "Every ragged tramp that comes to Ithaca goes straight to the queen with a story of Odysseus, hoping to get a meal. And she listens eagerly, and treats the beggar well, when all the time there is not one word of truth in all he says. You would make up a story too, I suppose, if we would give you a cloak and tunic for it. But save your breath, for I doubt not that he is dead." Tears

came to the swineherd's eyes. "He loved me, and was kind to me," he said.

"Friend," said the beggar, "You may not believe me, but I say to you upon my oath, Odysseus will return. He will be here before the next new moon, and take his vengeance. Make me no gifts for saying so, until he comes."

Eumaeus answered, "Then I shall never make them, for he will not come. And yet his coming is the one thing that we long for—Penelope and Laertes and Telemachus and I. My heart aches when I think of him. But it cannot be. He has been hated utterly by all the gods. Even Telemachus, his son, who, I have often said, would be as great a man as his father, has taken a strange notion now and gone away to Pylos for news of Odysseus. I have no doubt that the suitors are planning to waylay him on the journey home."

The swineherd's face grew anxious. "But come," he continued with a brighter

look, "let us talk no longer of troubles. Tell me of yourself."

Fearing to reveal himself too soon, Odysseus told him a long tale in which he said that he had known Odysseus in the war. He wove into the story so much that was true about himself, that the swineherd was almost persuaded to believe him. At the end he added,

"Are you still in doubt? If what I say does not come true, then have me thrown down from the high rocks, that other beggars may beware of telling lying tales."

"What a fine thing that would be," exclaimed the swineherd, "for me to welcome you and treat you kindly here, and then turn about and slay you! How could I pray to Zeus with a clear conscience then?" And so they talked.

That evening when the other herdsmen had come in to supper, and it was storming out-of-doors, the pretended beggar told them a story of Odysseus in the war.

"We lay in hiding," he began, "under the walls of Troy, crouched among the marsh grass and tall weeds. An ugly night came on, with snow. Ice formed on the edges of our shields. The other soldiers had warm coats, but I had left mine in the camp, not thinking that I should need it. The night was bitter cold and growing colder. At last I nudged Odysseus, who was lying near. He listened readily.

"'I have no coat,' I murmured, 'and this cold is killing me.' Odysseus answered, 'Be quiet for the present.' He lay still a moment, then raised himself upon his elbow, saying,

"'Hark, friends, I have had a dream that warned me that we are far from camp. I wish someone would tell Agamemnon that we need more men.' A soldier sprang up quickly and went running back to camp. I saw that he had left his cloak. I took it, and slept com-

fortably till the morning." After a little pause, the beggar craftily added, "If I were only in my prime as I was then, someone would give me a cloak for the asking. As it is, they mock me for wearing rags."

The good-natured herdsman burst out laughing at the trick. But the story had pleased them, and they told the beggar that Telemachus would give him a cloak if he would ask for it.

The night had come on black and rainy, and a strong west wind was blowing. Eumaeus made a bed beside the fire for the beggar, and threw upon it the skins of sheep and goats, and an extra covering because the night was cold. Then all the herdsmen lay down before the fire and went to sleep, except the good swineherd, who put on his shaggy coat of goatskin, took his spear, and went out to sleep near his hogs, and see that they were protected from the storm.

XXIX. Father and Son.

Footsteps sounded without the swineherd's hut. Eumaeus and his beggar guest sat at their morning meal. The dogs sprang up and ran to the door, wagging their tails.

"It is a friend, Eumaeus; see the dogs." It was the beggar who spoke. The latch lifted, and Telemachus stood in the doorway. The swineherd, who was mixing wine and water, dropped the bowl in his surprise, and hastened to greet his dear young master. The old man kissed Telemachus and wept for joy to see him safely home again, for he loved the young man as a father loves his son.

"Dear boy," he cried, "light of my life, I thought the day you went away to Pylos that I should never see you again. Come in and let me be cheered by the sight of you. For you do not

often come here, busy as you are with watching the crowd of suitors at the palace."

"I came to see you," answered Telemachus, "and to ask about my mother. Has she married yet?"

"She still waits patiently at home," said Eumaeus, "and the days and nights pass wearily as ever." The disguised beggar now arose and silently offered his seat to the young prince. But he refused it, for he saw the man was old. The swineherd made him another seat of brushwood covered with fleece. So these three ate together, the young prince, the old swineherd, and the beggar-king.

When the meal was done, Eumaeus bound his sandals on his feet, and started for the palace to tell Penelope that Telemachus was safely home. He asked Telemachus if he should not go and tell Laertes the good news, also, for since the young man had been gone, his grand-

father had hardly eaten or drunk, or gone to oversee his fields, but had sat at home grieving, and losing strength each day. Telemachus however, wished the swineherd to return at once, and tell no one but Penelope that he had come. The queen might better send her maid secretly to tell Laertes.

The swineherd had hardly left the hut when Odysseus, looking after him, saw without the door the stately form of the wise goddess. The dogs saw her, too, and slunk away across the courtyard, whining. But Telemachus did not see her, for the gods do not appear to everyone. She raised her brows in signal for Odysseus. He went outside the courtyard wall, and stood before her in the sunshine. She said to him,

"Reveal yourself now to Telemachus, and go with him to the palace. I will be near you, for I am eager for the fray." She touched him gently with her wand.

He stood erect and drew a long, deep breath. His beggar's garb slipped from him, and in its place he wore a mantle like a king's. His face grew young and brown, his hair and beard were dark again. With a soldier's bearing, he went back into the hut.

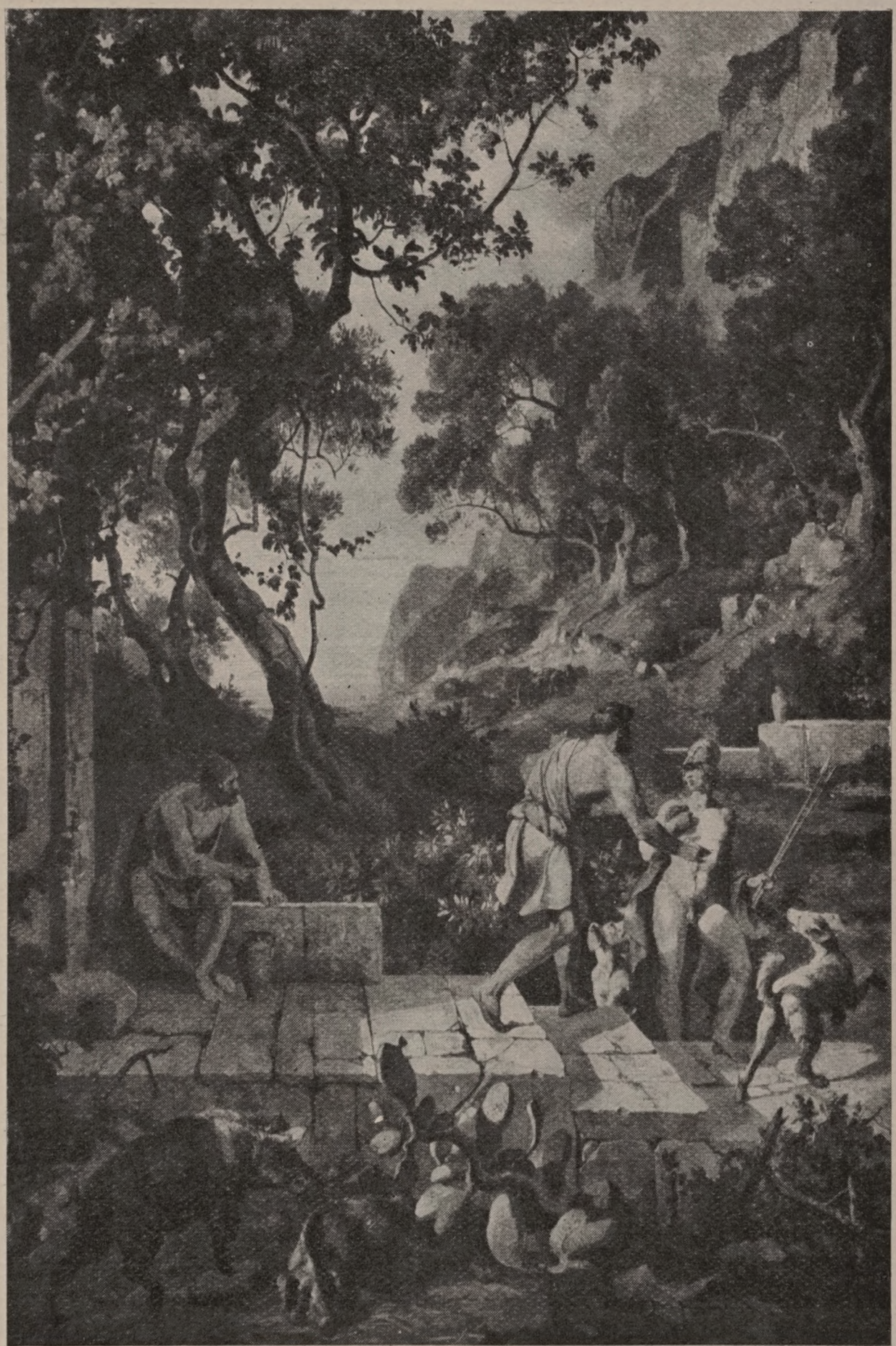
Telemachus looked up in startled wonder.

"Are you a god?" he cried. Odysseus bent over his son, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"I am your father, whom you love," he said. The young prince started back and could not speak. Then finding words he cried out,

"No, no, it cannot be! You are deceiving me."

"Have no fear," said the king gently, "I am Odysseus, gone these twenty years, but home at last." Telemachus threw his arms about his father's neck and sob-



THE GREETING OF EUMACUS AND TELEMACHUS.

bed for joy. Even Odysseus wept, for it was as if the dead had come to life.

Father and son sat down in the swineherd's hut and talked for many hours about Penelope, the war, and lastly of the hundred suitors and how they might destroy them. They suspected,—what was true,—that at that very moment the suitors, seeing in the harbor the ship that brought the young prince home, were saying:

"Strange, how the gods help this man out of danger. We watched for the ship to capture it and slay him, but lo, here he is among us safe and sound. Let us lie in wait for him and slay him secretly on some dark night."

Meanwhile the swineherd was coming back along the road. But when he entered the hall, the king had disappeared, and only the wretched beggar sat talking with Telemachus before the fire.

XXX. The Beggar at the Palace.

Telemachus knew that his mother would not rest until she saw him with her own eyes. So he bound on his sandals, and armed with his heavy spear, set out for the palace. His last words to Eumaeus had been to take the beggar to the town and let him beg his living there.

"Friend," Odysseus had answered, playing his part skillfully, "the morning is chilly, and my clothes are miserably thin. 'Tis a long way to the town, they say. But I will go, when I have warmed me at the fire."

There was great rejoicing when Telemachus entered the palace. His old nurse saw him first, and ran to him with tears of joy, and all the other women of the house gathered about him and greeted him lovingly. His mother came and threw her arms about his neck, and

fondly kissed him on the face and both eyes, saying:

"So you are here, my own dear son, light of my life. I said I should never see you again, when you sailed away secretly to Pylos, to find news of your father. Now tell me what you found."

Telemachus answered:

"Mother, I have just escaped from death. But do not ask me about it now, for I must go down to the market place and find a friend who came with us from Pylos. I sent him around into the harbor with the ship, while I myself landed near the farm. Peiraeus is entertaining him for me. But mother, bathe and put on fresh garments, and go to the upper rooms, and pray to the gods to give us a way of vengeance."

So his mother went to do this, while Telemachus set out for the town. In the marketplace he met his friend together with Peiraeus. The latter was caring for

the gifts which Telemachus had received from Menelaus. He said,

"Telemachus, have your servants come to my house, that I may send you the gifts of Menelaus." But Telemachus replied:

"Do not send them for the present. Wait until I have driven away the suitors. For they might destroy me and divide my property. And if they should, I would rather have you keep the gifts for yourself, than let the suitors get them."

They went together to the palace, and after bathing, they sat down and ate a meal, while the queen spun her fine yarn near by. When they had finished, she said,

"Telemachus, I am going to my own room and to my bed,—where I have sorrowed ever since Odysseus went away,—because you will not tell me before the the suitors come in, what you have learned about your father."

Then Telemachus told her all that he had heard from Menelaus,—that Odysseus was a prisoner on Calypso's island, and had no ship or crew to bring him home. The story stirred her very heart. The friend of Telemachus said—for he was a prophet,--

"Wife of Odysseus, surely Menelaus did not know all of the truth. Listen to me, for I will prophesy: Odysseus is already in his native land. He waits even now for the right time to come for him to punish these suitors. He knows their evil doing. On board the ship I saw the flight of a bird that told me this."

"Ah, stranger," said the queen, "if only this prophecy of yours might prove to be true, I would give you such gifts that you would be rich indeed." As she spoke, the suitors came into the hall to dinner, and put an end to their quiet talk.

Meantime Odysseus and the swineherd had left the farm and were on their way

to the town. As they plodded along the stony road they came to a grove of poplar trees. Within the grove was a fountain built of stone, from which the Ithacans drew drinking water. At its top there was an altar where the people left their offerings to the nymphs of the fountain. Hard by the grove they met a goatherd following his goats.

"Ho, you good-for-nothing pig-driver," he cried, "you have found another fellow as dirty as yourself. Where are you taking the beggar? If he comes near the palace he will have footstools flung at his head." As they passed, he raised his foot and kicked the begger. For a moment it seemed as if Odysseus would knock the fellow down. But instead, he only turned aside to hide his flashing eyes. For he was biding his time. So they went on to the palace. As they approached the gate, Odysseus took the swineherd by the hand and said:

"Surely, Eumaeus, this must be the palace of the king. How strongly it is built! The gates are double, and there is a wall around the courtyard. And how many buildings there are, all joined together! Hear the music, too. There is some feast going on."

"You are not slow to notice things," answered the swineherd. "Go in first, if you will, or stay here and I will go first. But do not wait long by the gate, or someone may throw stones at you and try to drive you off."

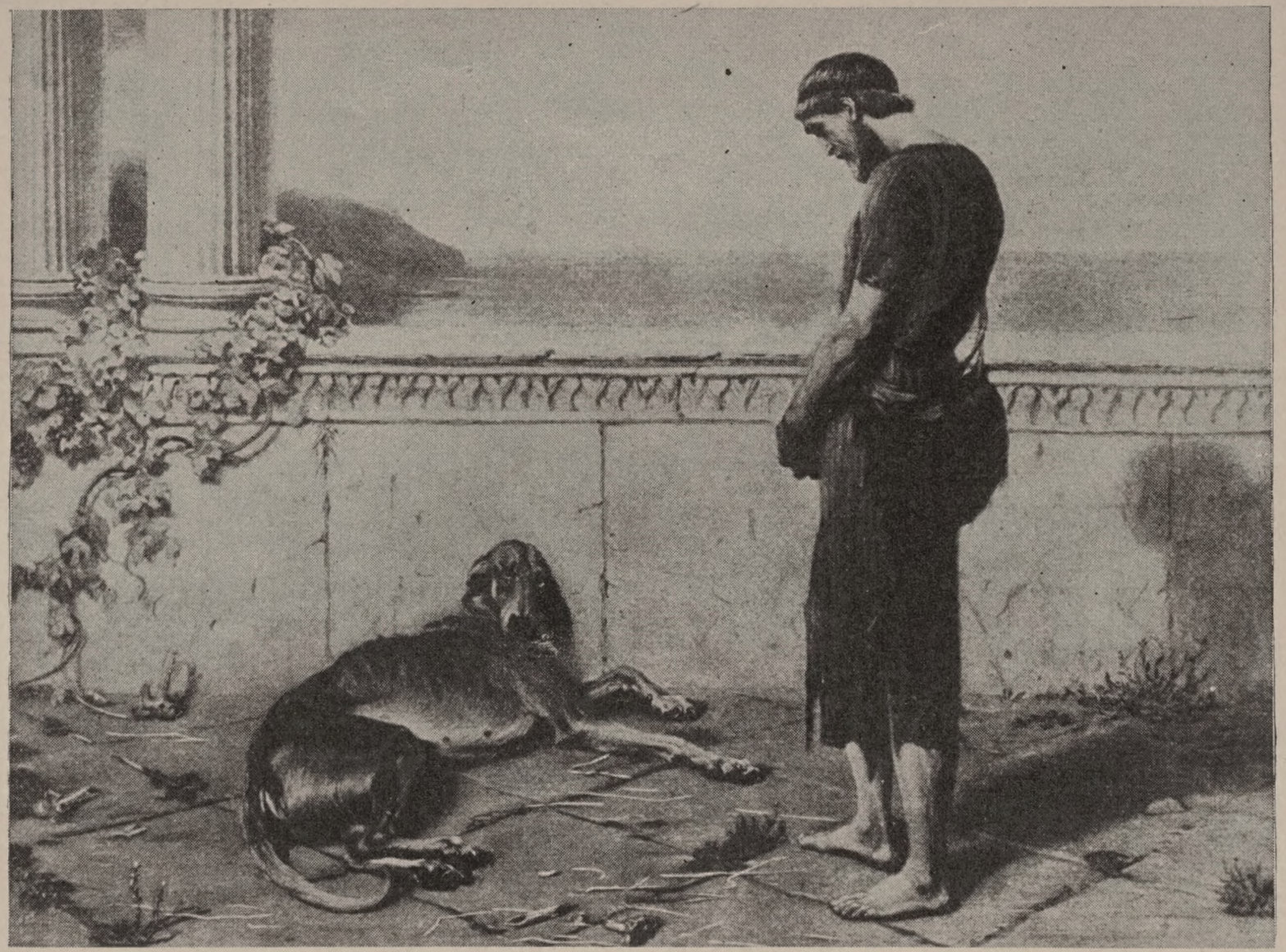
"I have no fear," answered the beggar, "for I am used to blows. But do you go first. We will not let them know that we have come together."

At the sound of the beggar's voice, the old dog, Argus, lying by the door, lifted his head, pricked up his ears, and wagged his tail. This dog had been a good one, of fine breed. Odysseus had often taken him upon hunting trips. But now that

the dog was old and useless, no one took any care of him. He did his best to welcome his dear master, but he had not strength enough to get upon his feet. Odysseus stooped to stroke the head of the only friend that knew him, and the poor dog, striving to lick his master's hand, stretched himself out then and there, and died of joy. There were tears in the beggar's eyes as he leaned upon his staff, over the form of his faithful friend.

The swineherd, having gone into the palace and found the suitors at breakfast, had taken a seat at the table of Telemachus, upon the farther side. The beggar soon appeared. He seated himself upon the threshold, just inside the door. Telemachus, seeing him, took a loaf of bread from one of the baskets, and all the meat that his two hands could hold, and said to Eumaeus across the table,

"Give this to the stranger, and tell him to ask more from all the suitors, for a



ODYSSEUS AND HIS DOG.

beggar must be bold." Eumaeus took the food and carried it to where the beggar sat, repeating the message of Telemachus.

"Great Zeus," prayed the beggar, in gratitude, "bless Telemachus, and let him gain whatever he desires." Then, when the meal was over, he arose and began to pass his empty wallet to all the princes in turn. One dropped in a crust of bread, another a bit of meat. But Antinous gave only a scornful look, and spoke angrily to Eumaeus. For the goatherd had told him who had brought the beggar in.

"Indeed," said the beggar, "you are not as generous as you are good-looking." Antinous reached beneath the table and drew out his footstool.

"Stand off, you pest, you mar-feast," he cried, and flinging the footstool, struck Odysseus a sharp blow on the shoulder. But he stood firm as a rock, and did not offer to strike back. He only glared from under his shaggy brows and nodded.

"A blow given in war," he said, "carries no sting. But Antinous gave me a blow because I am poor and hungry. If the gods listen to beggars, may Antinous die before his wedding day!"

The suitors trembled, fearing Antinous had struck some god in disguise.

"He has cursed you!" they cried, "you are doomed, for the gods often come among men poorly dressed like this, to find out who are kind, and who treat strangers badly." But Antinous only laughed.

The beggar now sat down unmolested in the doorway, and spreading out his wallet on the floor, ate from it the scraps which the suitors had given him.

But Penelope, among her maidens, heard that a stranger had been struck in the house.

"May the gods strike down Antinous even so," she said. "He is the worst of all our enemies. Eumaeus," she called, "Go tell the stranger I wish to speak to

him. Perhaps he has heard tidings of Odysseus in his travels."

"He does say that he has news, and that Odysseus is not far away," the swineherd answered.

"Go, call him," the queen repeated, "I wish to meet him face to face. Oh, if only Odysseus might come home! What vengeance he would take upon these men!" As she said this, she heard Telemachus sneeze loudly, so that the great hall echoed. Penelope laughed, and said again, "Go, go, Eumaeus, call him. Did you not hear how my son sneezed, for a blessing on my wish? It will come true."

Eumaeus went to where the beggar sat and said,

"Old man, the queen is calling for you. She will reward you if you tell the truth about Odysseus." But the beggar said,

"Wait till evening when these men are gone. I am afraid of them."

"What, has he not come?" exclaimed the queen, when she heard the beggar's answer. "Tell him a shy man makes a poor beggar. Still, it may be he is right."

So she waited with impatience for the end of the day to come.

XXXI. The Beggars' Quarrel.

That day there came into the hall one of the common beggars of the town, a fat, greedy rascal, who went by the name of Irus, because he ran on errands for everyone. The name was given mockingly, for Iris, the messenger of the gods, was very beautiful, and Irus the beggar was as far as possible from being good to look upon, for he was clumsy, awkward and ill-favored.

When Irus saw Odysseus sitting in the doorway, he was jealous. For a while he strutted back and forth, trying to attract the attention of his fellow-beggar, who took no notice of him. At last he stopped and said insultingly,

"Take yourself away from here, old man, before I turn you out. Can you not see they are all winking at me to

drag you off by the leg? Get up, I tell you." Odysseus did not move, but answered, "I am doing you no harm. This door will hold us both." And as the beggar blustered and came nearer, he added quickly, "Do not anger me; or old as I am, I may be dangerous." But Irus was eager for a fight.

"Hear the boaster!" he cried, "I'll do him an ugly turn; I'll drive him out like a pig from the cornfield; I'll knock out every tooth in his old head." The suitors burst into a roar of laughter, left their seats, and gathered around the beggars, offering a prize of goats' meat to the winner. Odysseus turned to them:

"Promise to see fair fighting," he said. They promised, and Odysseus stripped off his ragged clothes to the waist. As the suitors saw his broad chest and sinewy arms, a murmur of delight passed through the crowd.

"Who would have thought the old man

had so much muscle on him? Irus will catch a plague of his own bringing."

Now Irus was a coward, and had already begun to repent his rashness. But Antinous, who wished to see Odysseus beaten, whispered savagely in the beggar's ear,

"If you let him whip you, I will send you off in a black ship to the Bad King, and he will cut off your nose and ears, and give them to the dogs to eat."

But this only frightened Irus the more, so that he trembled in every limb. Indeed, he would have been very glad to escape from the encounter, but the servants pushed him on, and he could not get away from them.

Both the beggars stood up and raised their fists to strike. Odysseus wondered whether he should kill the beggar then and there or merely knock him down to teach him a lesson.

"If I show my strength," he thought, "the Greeks may recognize me."

Irus struck out first, aiming an uncertain blow at his opponent's sturdy shoulder. As quick as lightning came the stroke of Odysseus, and finding Irus' neck below the ear, felled him like an ox. Down in the dust he lay, and moaned with pain. The suitors threw up their hands and shouted with loud laughter. But Odysseus silently bent over the beggar, caught him by the foot, dragged him out of the house into the courtyard, and set him up against the wall. Thrusting a staff into his hand, Odysseus said:

"Sit there awhile, and scare away the dogs and swine." And putting on his clothes again, he sat down calmly in his old place by the door. The suitors heaped his food beside him,—the prize of goat's meat he had won. Amphinomus handed him a cup of wine with a kindly word. The father of this young man Odysseus had known well.

"Amphinomus," he said, "your father

was a good man, and you are like him. Therefore, listen to what I say. Men are as weak creatures as any upon earth. And yet, when all goes well with them they think that they are strong, and that evil days can never come to them. So they grow bold and do wrong things, thinking that they never will be punished. So I did; among men I was prosperous once. So these men are doing, worrying the wife of Odysseus and wasting his possessions. But the life of men is in the hands of the gods. Therefore, let no man do wrong. Odysseus surely will come home to his own. May you not be here to meet him, for bloody will be the meeting and bloody the parting, between him and these heedless suitors." As he drank the wine and handed back the cup to young Amphinomus, he looked into the young man's face. The latter made no answer, but only walked down the hall shaking his head. He could not put

faith in the words of the old begger, and yet he felt in some way that they were true.

XXXII. Penelope Among the Suitors.

Penelope said to the nurse:

"I have a mind to go among the suitors,—although I hate them. I have something to say to my son. He must not be spoiled by living only with such men as they are."

"Bathe your face first, my dear child," said the old nurse, "They must not see it stained with tears."

"Oh, do not talk so to me," said Penelope, "for I have had no beauty since Odysseus went away. But send two of the maids here, for I do not wish to go alone." While she was waiting for the maids to come, she fell into a light sleep. And as they came in and she awoke again, she seemed more beautiful than before. But she was no happier, for she sighed, as she rubbed her fair cheeks with her hands, "Oh, how I wish that

I might die as easily as I slept, and so no longer waste my life in sorrow."

She arose and went with her maids, and stood in the doorway of the great hall, holding her veil a little before her face.

"Telemachus," she said, "What is this that I hear? You have allowed a guest to be ill-treated in this house? I should be disgraced if he had come to harm."

"Mother, I do not wonder that you are angry at such actions," said Telemachus, "I could not help it,—the beggars had a fight. But it did not happen as the suitors wished. The stranger proved to be the better man. I only wish the suitors might be beaten as badly as old Irus was. He cannot stand upon his feet even yet, but sits there wagging his head like a drunken man."

As the mother and son talked together in low tones, the suitors gazed at Penelope with pleasure, for she seldom came among them. One of them said boldly,

"Penelope, if all the Greeks should see you, you would have more suitors here than ever."

"Eurymachus," she answered, "Whatever beauty I once had forsook me when my husband went away. It is true, he told me to marry again if my son should grow to manhood and he should not come home. And so I suppose I must. But alas, my suitors are not such as suitors used to be. For they always used to bring gifts for a bride, instead of destroying her property without paying for it."

"Penelope," said Antinous, speaking for them all, "if any of us bring you gifts, accept them, for it is not gracious to refuse. But we will never go away until you have chosen the best man of us to be your husband." The others all agreed, and sent their servants back to their homes to bring gifts for Penelope. One brought her an embroidered robe with twelve gold clasps upon it; another

a curious gold chain with amber beads; another a pair of ear-rings with drops; and still another a fine jeweled necklace. Each one brought her something beautiful. And then the suitors turned to dancing, and the queen went up to her own rooms, while the maids followed her, carrying the gifts. The beggar sitting in the doorway grimly smiled to see her winning gifts from the suitors by her clever speech.

XXXIII. The Scar of the Boar's Tusk.

The maids were lighting torches about the hall, for it was growing dark. The beggar went to them and said,

"Maids, let me do that, so that you may go up to the women's room and cheer your mistress as you work beside her."

The maids looked at each other and began to laugh.

"Beggar, you must be silly with wine," said one, "or else your victory over Irus has gone to your head. You are talking all the time. But look out, a better man than Irus may come presently and punish you." But Odysseus rebuked her so sternly that she was afraid, and ran away, and her companion after her.

Odysseus took his stand by the torches, to attend to the lights. And as he stood he watched the suitors, planning how he should outwit them. They began to jeer

at the old beggar. Eurymachus said laughing,

"Fellows, this beggar must have been sent us by some god, for his bald head shines with an unearthly light. Beggar," he continued, "will you come and hire out on my farm, or are you so lazy that you will do no work?"

"I should be pleased to show you that I can work, and fight too," answered Odysseus, "so that you would no longer jeer at me for begging food and drink. Prince, you think you are a mighty man; but I tell you that if Odysseus should come home again, those doors, wide as they are, would be too narrow for you to be crowding through, to get away." At this Eurymachus grew very angry.

"Wretch!" he cried, "Are you beside yourself with joy because you won the fight and beat the other beggar, or are you always chattering like this? I'll punish you," and he caught up a footstool.

But Odysseus crouched beside Amphinomus, and the footstool struck the wine-pourer, who fell, spilling the wine. The suitors clamored angrily, saying one to another,

"Would that this vagabond had died before he ever came in here, and made us all this trouble! We have no more good times at all, because we must be always quarreling about him." But now Telemachus spoke:

"Princes, it is very plain that you have had enough to eat and drink. You may go home as early as you please,—though do not let me seem to drive anyone away." They looked at one another, their teeth set on their lips, in amazement at his boldness. Amphinomus said, pleasantly enough,

"Friends, let us not be angry any more. We will leave the beggar to Telemachus, for he is the master of the house. If the wine-pourer will prepare our evening drink, we will go home." So after they

had poured out the drink-offering to the gods, and they themselves had drunk, they went to their own homes, earlier than they usually did.

In the well-worn rack beside a pillar stood the spears which Odysseus had carried before he went to Troy. And many shields and suits of armor hung around the walls.

"Telemachus," said Odysseus, "This fighting gear must all be put away."

"The suitors will miss it," said Telemachus: "They will ask what has been done with it."

"Tell them you have taken it to be polished," said his father, "or tell them that you wish to keep them from injuring one another, for spears tempt men to fight." So Telemachus said to the old nurse,

"Nurse, go and keep the women in their rooms while I take down this armor, and put it where it will not get so tarn-

ished by the smoke." The nurse was pleased.

"I wish you always were so careful about the house and all its treasures," she said, "but who will hold the light for you if you send away all the women?"

"This beggar will," he answered. "He has eaten my bread, and he shall pay for it."

The old nurse went and closed the door into that part of the house where the women had their rooms. Odysseus and Telemachus began to carry out the armor. As they were working, the half-darkened rooms seemed to grow light, so that they could see to go about as clearly as by day.

"Father," exclaimed Telemachus, "see how the walls shine. Surely a god is in this house. The whole room glows as from a blazing fire."

"Hush, do not question it," said wise Odysseus. "It is so. But go to bed; the

task is done. I will stay here, to see your mother." He felt the presence of the goddess who was helping them, although he did not see her.

Telemachus took a torch in his hand and went to bed. Odysseus sat down by the fire, a stranger at his own hearth still. The place was quiet at last. The glowing embers crackled and fell apart, making strange, bright pictures. But Odysseus did not see them. He was busy thinking and planning, for he knew that he was in danger of discovery. Some time had passed when he was aroused by women's voices in the hall. He heard a gentle step that he knew well. The door opened and Penelope entered,—his wife, whom he had not dared to see.

She walked slowly to a fleece-covered chair by the fire, and sat down, drawing her robe around her, for outside it was a windy night. The maids came in to clear away the suitors' tables, and the fragments

of food which had been left. They took the torches, nearly burned out now, and put them on the hearth, and piled fresh logs above them, to give both light and warmth. At sight of the pale beggar in the shadow, with his eyes fixed on the floor, they began to scold him for staying there so late. But Penelope rebuked them, saying,

"Did you not hear me say that I wished to talk with the stranger to-night? Bring a seat for him." Then turning to the beggar,

"Where do you come from? Tell me your name."

Odysseus could hardly bring himself to speak. At last, his eyes still on the floor, he said,

"Lady, do not ask me. I—I cannot tell you. It is a long, sad story." But the lovely lady said,

"Mine is a sad story, too, so I can pity you. For my dear husband has been gone these twenty years, and soon I shall have

to marry one of the suitors, for they will not give me any peace until I do, alas!" and as she spoke, the tears dropped down her sweet pale face.

The beggar turned aside as if the sight of her weeping were more than he could bear. But soon she dried her tears and said very gently,

"Will you not consent to tell me your story? Perhaps you have known my husband."

It was too soon to tell her all, however much he longed to do so. So he told her what he had told the swineherd, that he had fought with Odysseus in the war and had known him well. At every mention of the hero's name the lady wept. And yet it seemed as if she could not hear enough about him.

"Tell me, what clothing did he wear?" she asked, thinking to find out by this question whether he had really seen Odysseus.

"It is twenty years ago," said he, "and I may not remember all, but I do remember that he wore a white, smooth-fitting tunic, and a thick, purple cloak which was folded double. It was fastened with a golden brooch. I remember the brooch well, for every one admired it. It was carved into the shape of a hound, holding a fawn between its forepaws, and gazing fiercely at it as it struggled to escape. He had a herald with him, a man a little older than himself, round-shouldered, dark, and curly-haired."

At this the queen's tears flowed again. She knew that the man was speaking the truth, for she had woven the garments he described, and she herself had given Odysseus the golden brooch with the dog and fawn upon it. She wept until the beggar said,

"Wife of Odysseus, weep no more for him, for I will tell you that he is coming home. He is safe now, and he will not

be long. Before the year is over he will come."

Penelope could not believe it.

"Ah, stranger," she cried, "would that it might be so!" Then drawing a long sigh she said,

"From this time forth you shall be loved and cared for in this house. You were my husband's friend and faithful comrade. It brings me happiness to talk with you."

She called her maids and bade them prepare a bed for the stranger. The old nurse came with a basin of water to bathe his way-worn feet.

"I do this for Odysseus' sake," she said, "for of all the strangers who ever came into this house, you are the most like him."

"Yes," replied the beggar, "those who have seen us both say that we are alike."

Suddenly he turned away from the firelight. He had forgotton the scar of a

wild boar's tusk which he had borne on his knee since boyhood. But he was too late. The nurse's hand had found the the scar. She dropped his foot, upsetting the basin of water on the floor. She put her hand beneath his chin, and gazed into his face.

"Odysseus, Odysseus," she cried, choking with her tears. "To think that I failed to know you!" Odysseus saw her turn toward the queen. He caught her arm.

"Hush," he whispered, "Not a word to her. It is too soon." The good nurse answered,

"Not a word then. I can keep the secret."

And at the other end of the great hall, Penelope sat before the fire, dreaming of Odysseus, and praying to the gods for his return.

XXXIV. The Trial of the Bow.

Odysseus stood by the courtyard gate in the chill, early morning, listening to the sounds of awakening within the palace. He had passed a restless night on his bed of skins in the covered porch. Once he had heard the silence of the sleeping household broken by a woman's sob, and his wife's sad voice sighed out, "Odysseus, Oh, Odysseus!" Then all had been still again.

Odysseus knew that for every hour that he stayed in the palace he risked his life. There were many of the suitors who would not hesitate to kill a troublesome old beggar if the notion seized them. And yet to throw aside the disguise and boldly say, "I am Odysseus," would be utter folly. At the very least he would be beaten for an imposter, and the dogs would be set upon him. Yet in spite of all,

there was hope in his heart as he stood with uplifted hands and made his morning prayer to Father Zeus.

"O Father Zeus, if thou hast led me over wet and dry to my own country, to be merciful to me, then let me know it by some sign." A peal of thunder rumbled in the hills. Odysseus rejoiced to hear it, for he thought it was in answer to his prayer.

There was a room within the palace where twelve women stood all day before the hand mills, turning the stones that ground the wheat and barley into meal for bread. One of these women was weak and could not finish her task as early as the others. She had been grinding all night long. When the thunder pealed, she stopped her weary grinding for a moment as she sighed,

"O Father Zeus, I am worn out with cruel toil, grinding the barley for this crowd of suitors. Grant that they may eat

their last meal in this house today." And Odysseus standing outside, as he heard her word, rejoiced again, for he hoped that Zeus would answer this prayer also.

The maids were stirring now. Odysseus heard the housekeeper's sharp voice bidding them make haste, kindle a fire, sweep the house and sprinkle it, sponge off the tables, and wash the bowls and cups; for the suitors would soon be coming to their breakfast. She appeared in the door herself, with her arms full of purple cushions, which she set down in the porch and beat with a willow broom.

Twenty strong-armed maids went out to the well, carrying their water-jars upon their heads. Down the street came the woodcutters, ready to split wood for the fires. After them Eumaeus drove his fat, unruly hogs, to be killed for the day's feasting. He turned them loose in the courtyard and stopped to speak to the beggar.

"How goes it with you now?" he asked kindly. "Do the suitors treat you badly still?"

"Yes, but the gods will punish them," answered Odysseus.

The goatherd, whom they had met the day before on the road from the farm, drove in his goats and tethered them in the court-yard, saying as he passed the beggar,

"What! Are you still here? I see that I shall have to give you a taste of my fists."

Odysseus did not look at him, but only shook his head. Another kind of greeting came from the keeper of the cattle. As he led in a heifer to be slaughtered for the suitors, he held out his hand to the beggar.

"Stranger, I wish you better luck than you are having now," he said. "When I first saw you, a sweat broke out on me and my eyes filled with tears, for I thought, perhaps our lost Odysseus is forced to go like you, begging his way from house to house."

Odysseus saw that he could trust this man. In a low voice he answered,

"Odysseus will return and you shall see him standing in this very place; I swear it."

"Ah, stranger," said the herdsman, "I wish it might be so."

The suitors were gathering in the palace. As each one came in he dropped his cloak upon the chair or bench which happened to be nearest, and went out again into the courtyard to join in the killing of the sheep, the goats, the hogs, and the heifer. When they had done the butchering, they began to roast the parts over the fires for their morning meal. Eumaeus and the other herdsmen helped them. When the meal was ready, they seated themselves at the tables and the servants waited upon them. Near the door of the hall, Odysseus sat upon a common bench before a little table by himself. Telemachus sent him a

portion of meat and wine, as much as any of the others had.

"There, sit comfortably and eat your meal," he said, raising his voice that the suitors all might hear. "I will see that nobody dare trouble you."

The suitors looked at one another and bit their lips. They did not understand the young prince's boldness. But Antinous was not to be kept still.

"It is right enough that the beggar should have something to eat," he said. "Here is a little extra for him, because he is a stranger." And he took up an ox's hoof and flung it at the beggar's head. Odysseus turned a little aside and avoided the blow, smiling grimly as the ox-hoof struck the wall. Telemachus sprang to his feet.

"It is well for you that you did not hit the stranger," he cried hotly. "If you had, you would have felt my spear between your ribs. Let no man insult me in my own house, nor those whom I protect."

They looked at him in open-mouthed astonishment, then broke into mad laughter, rocking in their seats. Secure because they were many, they despised the threats of the young prince. But the friend of Telemachus, who had come back with him from Pylos, solemnly arose, pointing his finger at each one of the suitors in turn.

"Ah, wretched men!" he cried, for he was a prophet, "I see you weltering in your blood. I hear your voices wailing in the dark. An evil mist wraps round you. Your death is near at hand. The court-yard and the porch are full of ghosts, and look! The very walls drip blood!"

Again the suitors laughed, and one of them said:

"Telemachus, your guests are queer ones for a king's son. First you entertain that filthy vagabond, and now this fellow must stand up and play the prophet with his doleful speeches. Better pack them off

in a slave-ship to Sicily, where they would fetch their price."

Telemachus made no answer, but kept his eyes fixed upon his father, waiting for a sign.

In the time before Odysseus went away to war, a friend had given him a splendid bow. Odysseus prized this bow so highly that he had not taken it with him, but left it for safe keeping in the house. Now it happened on this day that Penelope had gone up the long stairway to the far-off treasure chamber of the house. She had unlocked the door with her great, crooked key, had taken down the bow from the peg on which it hung, and opened the shining case that held it. Then she sat down and as it lay upon her knees, she gazed at it a long, long time and wept for Odysseus. But at last she arose, with the bow in her hand, and a quiver full of arrows, and went down stairs again.

While the suitors and Telemachus were talking, the queen stood by the door-post

with one of her maidens on each side of her, waiting for a quiet moment. Now she entered, holding her veil before her face to hide the traces of her tears. She carried the great bow and the quiver of arrows. At sight of her the suitors ceased their wrangling. She spoke modestly:

"Princes, I offer you the great bow of Odysseus. Let each one make a trial with it. I promise to be the wife of him who can shoot an arrow through twelve axe-heads set up in a row. I will go away with such a one, and leave this house I love so well. But I shall remember it, even in my dreams."

Eumaeus the swineherd took the bow and arrows from her hand, as she bade him, and laid them down before the suitors. Tears stood in his eyes at sight of his loved master's weapons. But Telemachus sprang up with joy, unbuckling his sword and dropping his scarlet cloak upon the ground. "Come princes," he cried, "the prize is

worthy of a trial." He dug a trench for the axes in the courtyard, set them up in a row and stamped the earth firmly down around them. The suitors wondered to see how skillfully he did it. The winner's arrow must go straight through the twelve round holes for the handles.

"I will try first," said he, "for if I have the strength to use my father's weapons, then my mother may safely leave the palace in my keeping." Taking the polished bow in his hands, he braced himself and tried to string it. The bow trembled in his grasp, but did not bend. He rested a moment, then tried again with the same result. The third time he made a mighty effort, and he might have bent the bow, but Odysseus frowned and shook his head. Telemachus put the bow down laughing.

"Perhaps I am too young," he said. "You mightier men than I, come, try your strength." One of them came and tried,

but the string cut his soft hands. He set the bow against the wall.

"I cannot bend it," he said. "I think this bow will take the lives of many chiefs. But may the right man win!" Antinous was angry at this speech.

"These are strange words," he cried. "As if the bow must bring us death because you cannot bend it! Light a fire," he called to the servants. "We will heat the bow and soften it with grease." So the goatherd kindled a fire, and brought a cake of fat which lay inside the door.

While they were rubbing on the fat, Odysseus arose and went out into the courtyard where Eumaeus and the other herdsmen had gone a moment before.

"Friends," he called after them. They turned about. "What manner of men would ye be to aid Odysseus if he should suddenly return? Would you take sides with the suitors or with him?"

"With him," they cried, "if he would only come!"

Odysseus stood before them with his hands outspread.

"Behold, I have come," he said. "I am Odysseus." They started, and gazed upon him. "And that you may believe me, here is proof." He drew aside his beggar's rags and showed them the deep scar of the boar's tusk in his leg. The herdsmen looked at it, then threw their arms about him, weeping for joy. But Odysseus quickly stopped them.

"Now, do not weep," he said, "but go back into the house. Eumaeus, look after the women. Have them all go to their own rooms. And bring the bow to me. And do you," he said to the cowherd, "bolt and bar the outer gate of the courtyard."

Odysseus went back to the palace. One of the suitors was handling the bow, warming it on this side and on that before the

fire, and from time to time making an effort to bend it and put the cord around the tip. But the stout old bow resisted all his efforts. With a groan he cried out,

"What a shame that we are all so far behind Odysseus!"

"It is not so," said Antinous. "The gods will not let us bend the bow today because it is Apollo's feast day. We will make sacrifices to Apollo that he may let us bend the bow. Lay it aside until to-morrow."

The suitors, nothing loth, hung the bow upon the wall and began to occupy themselves with other things. Odysseus looked up at the bow where it was hanging.

"Antinous," he began, "it is wise of you to leave the trial till tomorrow, when the god will give the victory. But now, I have to ask a favor of you. Will you not please let me make a trial with the bow, that I may see if age has robbed me

of my strength?" At this the suitors all were furious.

"You senseless beggar!" cried Antinous, "Is it not enough that you are allowed to eat with noble men, and listen to all they say, but you must also join them in this trial? The wine has got into your brain and crazed you. Touch the bow, and you will wish you had not!"

Penelope then spoke:

"Antinous, you do not think the stranger would expect to win me for his wife, if he should bend the great bow of Odysseus, do you? For that could not be."

"No, lady," said Antinous, "we are not fearing that. Of course it could not be, that he should marry you. But if he should bend the bow, some Greek would say that the chiefs who were wooing the wife of Odysseus could not even bend his bow, and that a beggar came and bent it. And that would be putting us all to shame."

"Why should you be ashamed of this," said the queen, "when you are not ashamed to rob the household of your king? Give the stranger the bow, and let us see what he can do. If he succeeds, I will let him have new garments, and a sword and spear, and send him upon his way."

Now Telemachus was anxious that his mother should not see the beggar try the bow.

"My mother," he said, "let me decide this matter. For I have the right to give or to refuse the bow to anyone I choose. No one in Ithaca can say me nay. Then go to your own duties in the house, and keep your women busy at their looms."

Penelope found wisdom in these words, and so she went away to her own room.

There she sat weeping for Odysseus, until she grew so weary that she fell asleep.

Meanwhile Eumaeus had taken the bow in his hands and started toward Odysseus with it. But the suitors gathered around

him with such threatening words that he dropped it upon the floor.

"Swineherd," said Telemachus sternly, "how many masters do you serve? Go on with it, or I will drive you out of the house. I wish that I could drive some others away as easily." The suitors laughed at this. Eumaeus laid the bow in the hand of Odysseus. The others watched him, and remarked to one another:

"Really, the beggar has a shrewd eye for a bow. See how skillfully he handles it, as if he had one like it at home, or were taking the measure to make one."

And as they looked, Odysseus, easily as a minstrel stretches a new string on his lyre, bent the stout bow and slipped the cord around its ivory tip. He twanged the bowstring. It hummed loud and clear. Then suddenly there came a peal of thunder. The suitors looked at one another, and their faces turned first red, then pale. Odysseus caught up an arrow, laid it on

the bow, and taking quick, sure aim, shot it straight through all the twelve axe-handles, from first to last. Out from the farthest ring it flew.

"Telemachus," he said, "your guest has not quite shamed you, after all. I still have strength, although the suitors have despised me. But it is supper time, and we must give the guests a feast with music and with dancing." He nodded to Telemachus, and at the sign, the young man buckled on his sword, took up his spear and shield, and stood full-armed and ready.

Odysseus stripped off his rags and sprang to the doorway, bow in hand. He poured out all the arrows from the quiver and dropped them at his feet. His voice rang like a trumpet:

"Now is the trial ended! And now these arrows find another mark." He drew the bow again. Antinous had paused with a goblet halfway to his lips. The

arrow struck him full in the throat. The goblet crashed on the floor, and he fell backward, mortally wounded. The suitors sprang up from their seats.

"Shame on you, beggar! you have killed him," they cried, thinking Odysseus did it carelessly.

"Dogs!" cried Odysseus, "You have been saying to yourselves that I would never more come home; and so ye did me evil in my house; but now my hour has come, and you shall die!" He began to shoot the arrows one after another. Each one found the heart of a prince. The suitors leaped to the walls, but not a spear or shield was to be found there. They were caught in a trap. Eurymachus, the bravest, began to parley, to gain time:

"If it is true that you are Odysseus, we cannot blame your wrath. But Antinous, who brought us here, is dead. The rest of us will repay you many times for all that we have used of yours,"—

"Never!" Odysseus answered, "Not if you gave me all you have. Fight me or run."

"Draw your blades, brothers!" shouted Eurymachus. "Turn up those tables for shields, and make a rush for the door. We are too many for him yet." And drawing his sword, he sprang at Odysseus with a terrible cry. Instantly an arrow pierced his breast and he fell back dying. One after another the princes met the same fate. It was a fearful sight.

But Odysseus had not many arrows left. Seeing this, Telemachus ran to the store room and brought back shields and spears for himself and his father and the two herdsmen. But now the tide began to turn in spite of him. The goatherd had stood at a distance looking on. He espied a small door in the wall, stole to it unnoticed and went out. He soon returned laden with spears. The suitors snatched them from his willing hands and began to hurl them at Odysseus.

"All is lost," thought Telemachus, fighting bravely to protect his father.

"Who has done this?" Odysseus cried, "Was it the women, or the goatherd?"

"I left the door to the storeroom open, and he found it," answered Telemachus.

"Catch that fellow and hang him," said Odysseus to the herdsmen. They went and lay in wait for the man, and as he came out of the storeroom laden with more spears, they caught him and bound him fast with ropes, and left him hanging to a pillar, telling him grimly that he might guard the arms. Then they came back to Odysseus, and the four of them, standing by the doorway, fought desperately against the crowd of suitors in the hall. So outnumbered, they might not have held out long, but suddenly a tall form stood beside them.

"Mentor!" called Telemachus. But Odysseus knew the wise goddess herself, in spite of her disguise. He heard her

say: "Odysseus, I am here," and his strength suddenly equalled that of twenty men. His enemies fell helplessly before him. Their spears instead of wounding him, struck the door, the walls and the pillars. Their arms grew weak with fear. They begged for mercy, but there was no mercy. One he wounded in the neck, another in the side, and every time he sent a spear, one of the suitors fell. Up and down the hall Odysseus and his three friends followed them, and there were moans and groans until the last one bit the dust. Then he stopped and gazed around. The wicked suitors lay heaped one upon another like fish caught in the net Odysseus leaned upon his spear, too weary to be glad.

"The gods and their own deeds destroyed them," he said solemnly.

XXXV. The Queen's Welcome.

When the hall had been cleansed from the dreadful slaughter of the princes, and sulphur had been burned throughout the house, Odysseus called his servants to him. They hailed their master with delight, and crowded around him, eager to touch his hand. But there was one person who had not yet given the king a welcome. The old nurse had run joyfully to tell the good news to the queen. But Penelope would not let herself believe it. Sadly she said, as she lay on her couch,—for she had slept through all the tumult:

"Good nurse, it cannot be. The gods have crazed you. Why have you wakened me from a sound sleep with such a tale? If any other of the maids had wakened me to tell me this, I would have had her punished." But still the nurse insisted,

"Believe me, dear lady, he is here. He is the stranger who came yesterday. Telemachus has known it all the time."

The queen sprang from her bed weeping and clasped the old nurse in her arms.

"Oh, nurse," she cried, "If he has really come,—but I do not believe he has,—how could he drive the suitors off, he alone, and they so many?"

"I do not know," answered the nurse "I did not see. We sat in our own inner room behind closed doors, and trembled, for we heard the groans of dying men. At last Telemachus came there and called us out. His father had sent him. We went and there we saw Odysseus standing, like a lion, over the bodies of the slain. He had killed the wicked suitors, every one of them." And the old nurse laughed aloud.

"Oh, how can you laugh?" Penelope cried in great distress, "It was not Odys-

seus, but some god who killed the suitors, in anger at their wicked deeds. Odysseus long ago lost hope of coming home. And he himself is lost." But she was trembling as she went from her chamber to the hall, and sat down opposite Odysseus in the firelight, silent and amazed. She gazed with a long, anxious look, now upon his face, again upon the ragged clothes he wore.

Now, when Odysseus saw this, he arose smiling and went into another room. There he bathed and put off his old disguise. Clad at last as a king should be, he came back and sat down in the firelight beside the farther wall. He did not speak to her but waited, looking down. Still she gazed at him with wide eyes and said nothing.

"Mother," exclaimed Telemachus in wonder, "why do you not go to him?"

"My child," she said in a low voice, "I am dazed with the wonder of all this. I

cannot speak to him nor look him in the face nor ask a question of him. But if this really be Odysseus, I shall know it, for he and I together have a secret token."

Odysseus could keep silent no longer.

"My wife," he said sadly, "the gods have made your heart as hard as stone. Come, nurse, make me a bed in the open court, that I may sleep like a stranger in my own house, since my own wife will not welcome me."

"Nay, I am not hard-hearted," answered she, "however, sleep in the open court if you will. Nurse, move his massive bed out there. Throw plenty of fleeces upon it."

"Woman," exclaimed Odysseus angrily, "these are strange words from you! Move my bed from its place? Indeed, that would be a hard task for anyone, unless he were a god, for I built it, and the room in which it stands, around a growing olive tree. I smoothed the tree trunk

into shape, and made it one of four bed-posts. I myself inlaid the frame with gold and silver and with ivory. No one can move it. You and I alone know this is true."

He arose and would have left the hall, but she ran to him weeping and threw her arms about his neck.

"At last, at last," she cried, "That is our secret! Now I know you are Odysseus and no other." And Odysseus, as he held her close, thanked Father Zeus for her long faithfulness.

XXXVI. Laertes and Peace.

Very early the next morning Odysseus arose and told Penelope that he was going to the wooded farm to see his father Laertes, who had mourned for him so long.

"But you must stay indoors," he said to her. "Our troubles are not over yet. The townspeople know by this time of the killing of the suitors. Among them were the foremost young men of Ithaca. Their fathers and brothers will all be against me. If they come here today, do not stir from your own rooms."

It was hardly daylight, but Odysseus and Telemachus set out with the two herdsmen, fully armed. They did not wish the people to see them as they went walking through the town.

At the farm of Laertes the laborers had all gone to the fields to gather stones to

build the vineyard walls. These men were slaves and lived in a shed which ran around the outside of the house. The shed was empty, and no one was in the house but an old woman who kept it for Laertes. Odysseus told his companions to kill a fat hog and prepare a meal. He took off his armor and left it with them, and went into the vineyard, looking for his father.

Not far away he saw Laertes, busily hoeing around the roots of a young plant. He wore a dirty tunic, patched and coarse, and leather leggings to protect his legs from brambles. He had gloves on his hands, and on his head a cap of goatskin. He was bent with age, and worn with grieving for his long-lost son.

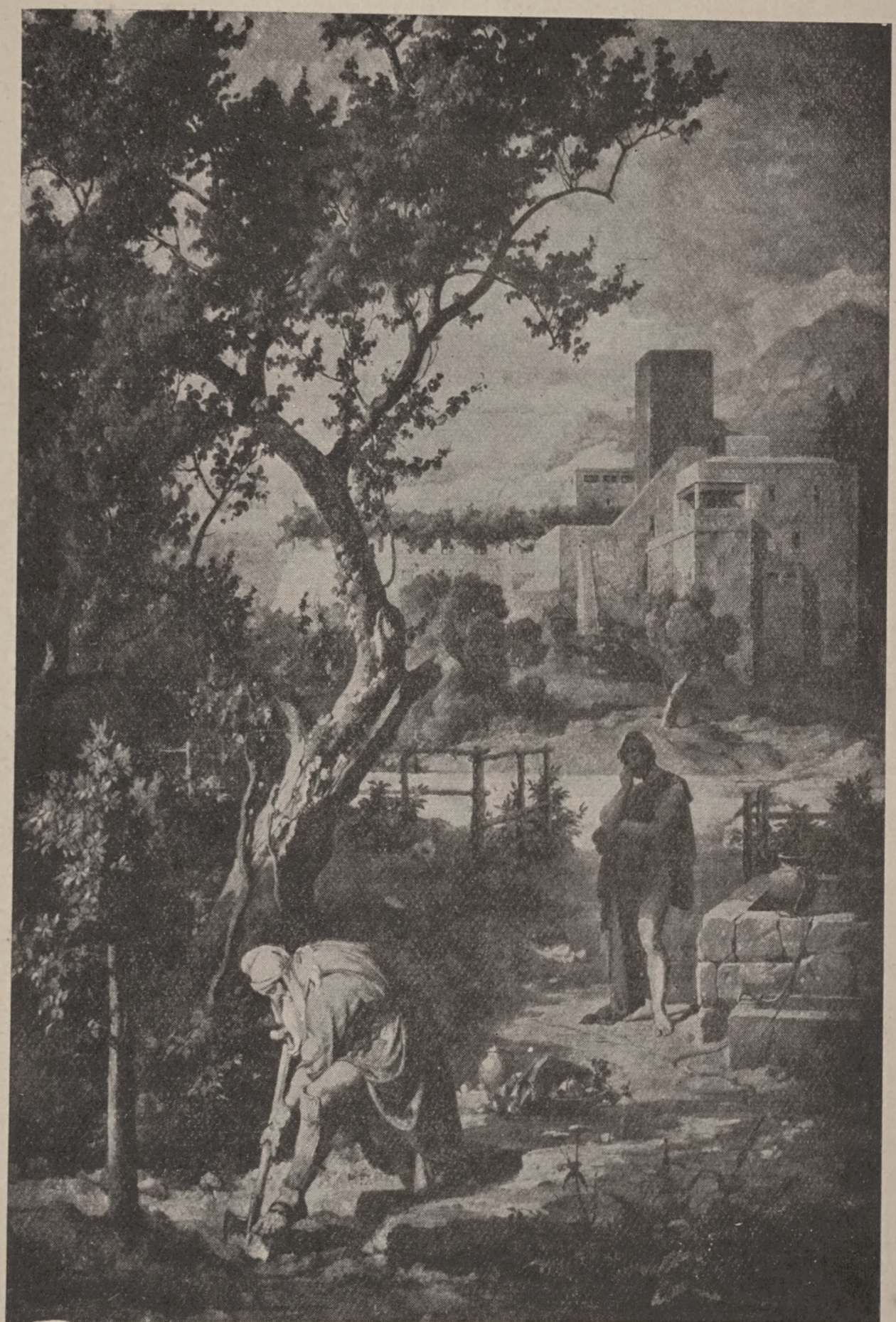
The sight of the old man touched Odysseus to the heart. Tears came to his eyes. He stood awhile beneath a pear tree, watching his father. Laertes, with his head bent low, was busy about the plant when Odysseus spoke to him:

"Old man, everything upon this farm seems well cared for except yourself. And yet you look more like the owner than a slave. Is the farm yours? And is this country Ithaca?" Laertes arose and looked the stranger over. "I entertained a man from Ithaca one day," Odysseus continued, "who said his father was Laertes. I took him home and entertained him well, and when he went away I gave him valuable gifts."

Then Laertes answered sadly:

"Yes, you are in Ithaca, but you gave your handsome gifts in vain, for he to whom you gave them is not here. If he were, he would return your kindness and take you to his home. He was my only son. How long has it been since you have seen him?"

"Four years ago he left my house," Odysseus said, "and I had hoped to meet him here again."



ODYSSEUS WATCHING LAERTES.

At this the poor old man burst into tears. He gathered dust in both hands from the ground, and scattered it on his gray head, moaning in grief. Odysseus could not bear to see it. He sprang toward his father, clasped him in his arms and kissed him.

"O father, look at me!" he cried, "I am the one you grieve for, even I. So weep no more, for let me tell you—I have killed the suitors, every man of them. I have paid them back for all the wrong they did me." But Laertes would not believe him.

If you are Odysseus indeed," he said, "show me some proof of it." Odysseus showed him the scar upon his leg.

"And I can give more proof," he said. "When I was a little boy, you gave me, for my own, ten apple trees, fourteen pear trees, and forty fig trees. And that day as we walked through the vine-

yard, you marked off fifty rows of vines for me, all bearing grapes."

Then Laertes grew faint with joy, so that his knees gave way beneath him, for he knew that this was his own son. Odysseus held him gently in his strong arms until the poor old man could stand again. Then they walked on together to the farmhouse. The herdsmen and the old woman who kept house had prepared a meal for them. As they sat down to eat, the laborers, Dolius and his sons, came in, all tired from their work in the vineyard. They halted on the threshold, astonished at the presence of a stranger.

"Come, come, Dolius," said Odysseus in the kindest way. "All of you stop wondering and sit down to dinner. We are waiting for you."

Then Dolius, the aged servant, and all the others knew him for their master, and they ran to kiss his hands, for they were wonderfully glad. So they all sat down

and ate together. When they had finished, wise Laertes said,

"I am afraid the townspeople will attack us for the killing of the suitors." Odysseus had been thinking the same thing, but he answered,

"Do not fear, but one of you go and see if you can see them coming." A man ran out to look and was soon back.

"To be sure, they are coming," he cried, "and they are very near. Get your weapons ready." They sprang to arm themselves, and old Laertes said,

"This is a happy day for me, when I can see my son and my son's son fight side by side."

As Odysseus had foreseen, the men of Ithaca were struck with horror when they heard of the killing of their sons and brothers among the suitors. They seized their spears and started out in an angry crowd to find Odysseus. And here they found him, armed and ready, in front of

his father's door, with the two old men Laertes and Dolius, Telemachus, and the six young sons of Dolius for his army. Gray-haired though Laertes was, he had not forgotten how to fight. He was the first to throw his spear. As the men of the town came on, the spear of Laertes struck the leader and he fell. The battle was on. But it did not last long, for Odysseus and his men charged furiously, and the others fled before their spears. Odysseus would have followed them back to the town. But suddenly a mighty voice was heard:

"Hold, men of Ithaca, fight no more!" A peal of thunder sounded from the sky, —the sign of Zeus. The warriors halted, fearing to go on.

"It is the will of the gods," they said, "we will fight no more."

The fleeing men turned back, and then and there a lasting peace was made between Odysseus and his people. He lived

out his life among them, making their hearts glad, and teaching them the courage, and the readiness, and the endurance that he had learned from his hard life.

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